

Revisit administration of agri sector

All political parties should support another Constitution amendment to put agriculture on the Concurrent List for the benefit of the farmers



FARM VIEW
SURINDER SUD

A significant recommendation of the MS Swaminathan-headed National Commission on Farmers that has not received the needed attention is to shift agriculture from the State List to the Concurrent List of the Constitution. This would allow the Union government to have a greater and a relatively more decisive say in the matters related to agriculture and farmers without majorly diluting the powers of the state governments. At present,

the Centre has to rely on the state governments to implement even those farm development and farmers' welfare schemes that are sponsored and funded by it. Leaving agriculture in the hands of the states has, indeed, been the legacy of the antiquated Government of India Act, 1935. The logic then was that since agriculture was basically region-specific and depended primarily on local agro-ecological conditions and native natural resources, the provincial administrations would be better placed to look after it. The predominantly subsistence type of agriculture in vogue in those days was, more or less, self-contained with little inter-regional interactions for procuring inputs or selling the output. The problems besetting the farmers, too, were generally location-specific. The situation is vastly different now. The modern agriculture transgresses regional boundaries with inter-state commercial dealings being

part of the game. Agriculture is also getting integrated with other sectors of the economy, notably trade, industry and services. Policy initiatives and regulatory decisions taken by one state can now affect, directly or tacitly, the agri-economy of the other states as well. An unbridled control of the states over the farm sector is, therefore, posing problems and proving counterproductive. The fifth and final report of the Swaminathan panel released in October 2006, mooted the transfer of agriculture to the Concurrent List, also referred to some of the key aspects of administration of this sector which necessitated a revisit to its constitutional status. The report pointed out that the decisions concerning support prices of crops, institutional credit and agri-commodities trade, both domestic and international, are taken by the Centre. Some important laws having a significant bearing on agriculture have been enacted by Parliament and are

being administered by the Centre. The Protection of Plant Varieties and Farmers' Rights Act, the Biological Diversity Act, and the National Food Security law can be the cases in point. Besides, the bulk of the funding for rural infrastructure, irrigation and other farm development programmes comes from the Centre. "By placing agriculture in the Concurrent List, serving farmers and saving farming becomes a joint responsibility of the Centre and the states," the commission said. There are other pressing reasons for the statutory change as well. Some of the Centre's flagship initiatives to address the farmers' woes and boost their incomes are not delivering the expected results because of non-cooperation of some state governments. The notable ones among these are the crop insurance scheme; the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-Kisan) scheme to augment farmers' income by direct payment of Rs 6,000 a year; and the Pradhan Mantri Annadata Aay Sanrakshan Abhiyan (PM-AASHA) to ensure remunerative prices for the farm produce. Moreover, some vital reforms

concerning agricultural marketing, land leasing, contract farming and a few others are not making much headway for the same reason. Little wonder, therefore, that the Dalwai committee, which went into the issue of doubling farmers' income, has also pitched for placing farm marketing in the Concurrent List to enable the Centre to revamp agricultural mandis, improve their functional efficiency and expand the rural marketing infrastructure. This report has further strengthened the case for moving agriculture to the Concurrent List. In the past, too, the Constitution has been altered to switch items from one List to another. The 42nd amendment, carried out in 1976, for instance, had shifted five subjects, including forests and wildlife protection, from the State List to the Concurrent list. Considering the significance of the issue and the potential gains from it, all political parties should support another Constitution amendment to put agriculture in the Concurrent List for the benefit of the farmers.

surinder.sud@gmail.com

CHINESE WHISPERS

Call for unified leadership

After some All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK) MLAs publicly criticised its dual leadership structure – led by Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Edappadi Palaniswami and his Deputy O Panneerselvam – the two leaders have put a gag order on party leaders. A joint statement said: "Whoever wishes to express their views for the welfare of the AIADMK should utilise opportunities in the party – like the general and executive councils, besides consultative sessions." But dual leadership is not new in the AIADMK. When former CM J Jayalalithaa was alive, the state administration was looked after by her, while her friend and close aide V K Sasikala took decisions on party affairs, including the appointment of ministers. After Jayalalithaa's demise, Sasikala tried to take overall control, but Palaniswamy and Panneerselvam joined hands and kept her and her family members, including nephew TTV Dinakaran, out.

Rare bonhomie



SOURCE: TWITTER

In a rare bonhomie, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Adityanath on Monday paid a visit to Samajwadi Party (SP) patriarch Mulayam Singh Yadav at his residence on Vikramaditya

Marg, Lucknow. The SP patriarch was admitted to hospital with high blood sugar. Adityanath took stock of Yadav's health and gifted him a book on Kumbh, 2019. Yadav's son and former state Chief Minister Akhilesh Yadav and his estranged uncle Shivpal were also present during Monday's meeting. The latter's presence immediately gave rise to speculation there could be a rapprochement of sorts between Akhilesh and his uncle Shivpal. In any case, after the SP's dismal performance in the recently concluded Lok Sabha election, Yadav had reportedly asked his son to ensure all senior leaders, who had left the party in recent years, must be back to its fold without delay.

Mallya faces crowd wrath



A video doing the rounds on social media shows beleaguered businessman Vijay Mallya boomed with chants of "chor hai (you are a thief)" as he watched the

World Cup fixture between India and Australia at the Oval on Sunday. In one clip, a small crowd of people could be seen pushing and shoving as Mallya made his way out after the match. He could be seen answering back but his words were inaudible. Mallya is facing extradition – the 63-year-old left India in 2016 after defaulting on loans amounting to ₹9,000 crore.

Why it's tough being a start-up in 2019

Funding has dried up, government initiatives are riddled with problems and the days of copycat ideas are over

KARAN CHOUDHURY

Being a digital commerce firm with no backers can be tough. If the bigger players such as ShopClues are trying to merge with players such as Snapdeal to survive. Things are worse for the ones that are bootstrapped.

A tough road ahead for start-ups

Not just private investors or PE funds that have come up short, even the government's initiative to promote start-ups has not done much to help out budding entrepreneurs.

Ask Abhishek Verma, he has a few battle scars to prove it. He is the founder of Quikmile, a tech-enabled logistics ecosystem. The firm has built a vehicle tracking and transport management system for logistics companies and fleet owners via which they can track and manage their assets in real time.

Incorporated in June last year, the company working out of a three-bedroom flat-cum-office in Delhi NCR is at present being funded by Verma's own savings, and loans from friends and family.

It is not like the founders have not been looking out for investors, but no great offer has come their way. Sometime back Verma and his teammates hit upon the idea to register themselves under the incumbent government's flagship Startup India initiative.

They thought a certificate and recognition from the government might open a few closed doors. "See, for us it has been a struggle from Day One. We knew that when we left our

jobs to start a company of our own. What we wanted was some help along the way to initially help us survive and may be thrive later. That is why we decided to apply for the start-up certificate. We thought it would help us secure a government loan and also help us raise funds from venture capitalists and angel investors," said Verma.

Armed with the certificate, Verma and his team restarted the process of raising funds. But nothing seems to have changed. "What we found after having extensive talks is that banks do not provide Mudra loans or loans under Startup India schemes to private limited companies that are less than a year old. On the other hand, VCs and angel investors only give funding to private limited companies," Verma said.

What does the certificate promise?

According to the official website of the Startup India initiative, the certificate gives a company income tax exemption for a period of three consecutive years and exemption on capital gains and investments above fair market value. It provides easy winding up of a firm within 90 days and helps fast-track up to 80 per cent rebate on filing patents. Other than that it helps facilitate funds for investments into start-ups through alternate investment funds.

Consolidation a way out for bigger players

It has been tough raising funds for even bigger players as now the e-commerce space in India is getting divided between Amazon India and Walmart-

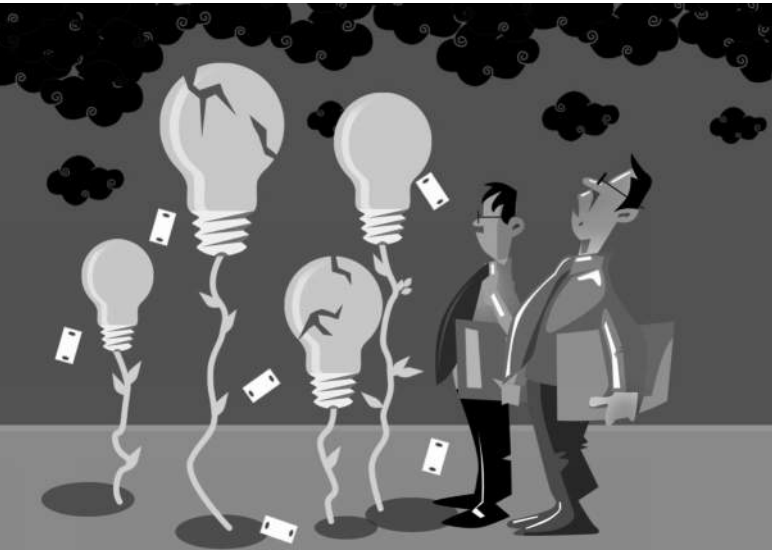


ILLUSTRATION: BINAY SINHA

STANDING STILL

\$12.68 bn Investments raised by Indian start-ups in 2018	864 Number of deals	2,34,715 Number of firms registered under learning and development module	2,92,025 Number of firms registered under Startup India Hub
---	-------------------------------	---	---

owned Flipkart.

Companies such as ShopClues, according to sources, are in talks with e-commerce firms such as Snapdeal for a merger. Snapdeal reportedly is conducting due diligence, a move that may lead to a potential acquisition of ShopClues. According to the sources, the move would benefit both firms as this might generate some investor interest for a fresh infusion of funds in the new entity.

However, discussions are at an early stage and people in the know said it

may be too soon to say if the deal would materialise. PwC is involved in the process, and if the deal goes through, it would be an all-stock transaction, sources said.

Snapdeal has been focusing on unbranded goods in Tier-II and Tier-III towns and cities. Co-founders Kunal Bahl and Rohit Bansal put in place a plan called Snapdeal 2.0 in 2017 when talks for a sale to Flipkart fell flat.

The order volume for Snapdeal has risen from about 35,000 daily orders in

August 2017 to over 200,000 new orders a day now.

According to reports, the deal is expected to value ShopClues between \$200 million and \$250 million. ShopClues had an estimated value of \$1.1 billion in 2017. Both companies share Nexus Venture Partners as a common investor.

"If this goes through, it will be a win for ShopClues as it does not have any suitor at the moment," said a person familiar with the ongoing discussions.

Reports of Snapdeal buying out ShopClues, anchored by common investor Nexus, have been doing the rounds for about a year though. ShopClues was also reported to have limited fund reserves.

"There has always been interest in us and these speculations are no exception. We have, in the past, and will continue to in the future, pursue partnerships and commercial relationships with rivals if it helps us serve our consumers better," said a spokeswoman at ShopClues.

Hope of stability ahead

For budding entrepreneurs, hopes are high as they expect renewed investor interest in the next couple of months. The key, they believe, is having a product with a difference.

"A stable government always helps get the investor interest back. Also the government would be bringing out the e-commerce policy soon. Now investors do not want to bet on two or three similar products and see which one survives. So we need to work on a product which is completely different from the competition," said Arvind Narang, the founder of a start-up focused on making safety products for women and children.

ON THE JOB

On worker participation rates



MAHESH WVAS

All the data provided in the Periodic Labour Force Survey Quarterly Bulletin is based on the Current Weekly Status (CWS). Under this system, a person is considered to be employed, unemployed or out of the labour force depending upon the activities of the person during the seven days preceding the day of the survey.

This is much better than the more frequently used Usual Status that depends on activities of the person during 365 days preceding the date of survey. The Usual Status is fraught with problems of recall. The CWS is based on much better recall.

However, the CWS definition is still quite relaxed. It is: "A person is considered working (or employed) if he/she worked for at least one hour on at least one day during the seven days preceding the date of survey."

Compare this to CMIE's definition in its CPHS where a person is considered employed if s/he is employed on the day of the survey or, if the status on the day of survey is uncertain, then if the person was employed on the day preceding the day of the survey. The preceding day is conditional upon the

status of the first day being uncertain. Such uncertainties arise when a survey is conducted in the morning and, say, a daily wage worker is not sure of whether s/he would get a job on the day. Only in such cases do we rely upon the status of the preceding day. The ambiguity regarding the status in the CPHS is therefore, almost zero. This cannot be said for the PLFS.

Since the reference period in the PLFS is a week, often people are concurrently present in more than one statuses during the week. For example, a person could have worked for an hour and then remained unemployed looking for a job for most of the rest of the six days of the week. In such cases, PLFS uses the priority criterion where the employed status gets priority (arbitrarily) over the unemployed status.

The CPHS does not face this problem because the reference period is just one day and the status of a day is unambiguous. Consequently, there is no need to introduce arbitrary rules of priorities.

As a result, the PLFS-CWS definition of a person being classified as employed allows more people to be called employed than the CMIE-CPHS definition. This should show up in a higher Worker Population ratio than the Employment ratio -- the equivalent ratio in CPHS. And, it does.

The urban worker-population ratio according to PLFS based on CWS in the April-June 2018 quarter was 41.8 per cent. The corresponding value in CPHS was 38.4 per cent. In the July-September 2018 quarter the values were 42.2 per cent and 38.2 per cent and in the October-December 2018 quarter the values were 42.2 per cent and 38 per cent. PLFS estimates of urban worker-population ratio are

about four percentage points higher than the CPHS estimates.

The difference persists across gender but it is a lot more pronounced in the case of women workers. The average urban worker-population ratio for men in the PLFS was 66.9 per cent during April-December 2018. The corresponding ratio in CPHS was 65.6 per cent, implying a difference of only 1.3 percentage point. In the case of women, the corresponding values are 16.9 per cent and 8.5 per cent, a difference of nearly 8.5 percentage points.

Why is there such a big difference in the ratio for women? A clue lies in Statements 26 and 27 of the PLFS Annual Report, 2017-18. These two tabulations provide data on hours worked. Statement 26 shows that on an average women work for 10 hours less a week compared to men. And, Statement 27 shows that more women work less hours a day than men. 15.5 per cent of rural women and 9 per cent of urban women work less than 24 hours a week which translates to less than 3.4 hours a day. Only 5 per cent of rural men and 2 per cent of urban men work such few hours.

It is likely that such women, who work less than 3 hours a day, do not consider themselves to be employed and therefore do not report themselves to be employed, to CPHS. However, PLFS considers them to be employed because it satisfies their definition and their priority criterion. In CPHS, the respondent's view of her principal status matters. This possibly explains why the CPHS shows a lower employment rate and in particular, a lower female employment rate than the PLFS.

The author is the MD & CEO of CMIE

LETTERS

Spare the depositor



This refers to "How not to waste the NBFC crisis" (June 10). I agree with the writer about the inadvisability of directing banks to lend to NBFCs in difficulties. The whole system is weighed in favour of the borrowers. The depositors and investors, who are basically people who have put their hard-earned money, and pensioners who have put their life long savings in banks, mutual funds and LIC are not adequately protected. This applies to banks saddled with huge unpaid loans to defaulting corporates or power companies. Power companies are in dire straits on account of low recoveries and transmission losses. This applies equally to banks and mutual funds that have lent to those NBFCs and HFCs who have in turn have lent to high risk borrowers or diverted the funds to front companies or affiliates with no prospect of repayments. Then there is the LIC, the premier life insurance behemoth, which is told to invest in all distressed banks and corporates, at the expense of its policy holders and investors.

It is always the depositors, investors and policy holders who must take a hit in the form of lower returns/interest. Now even some pension funds that have invested in these entities have to write down big losses. At a time when there are low returns on investment in physical assets, the distortions in financial system disincentivises investments in bank deposits and mutual

funds. What options does a person have when he reads every other day that either some big corporate borrower has defaulted or some big NBFC or HFC is in dire straits? All the solutions seem to end at the doors of the hapless depositors, investors and policy holders. And now, Union ministers are training their guns on the reserves of the central bank to fund their favourite projects!

Arun Pasricha New Delhi

The way ahead

This refers to your article "Transforming performance" (June 10). It is necessary to go back in time to review the changes on the economic front directly related to employment. The economy before 1991 had socialist leanings with government policies being more employee protective than market competitive. Annual appraisals of employees by superiors were unrealistic and based more on personal prejudices of the reviewing authority. Regardless of reviews, job security overruled performance quality.

Post 1991, a reverse trend occurred, when the economic policies led to capitalist leanings. Intensifying competition meant product quality had to be globally qualitative. Job performance superseded job security. Today both employers and employees are demanding more from the other. Corporate budgets are not annual formalities but clos-



er to reality. Changing market trends require more frequent monitoring and performance appraisals require greater interaction in the interest of both the company and the employee. The frequency in technological change calls for greater market alertness and the younger generation can play a vital role in this regard. Financial incentives to employees should be related to the achievement of budgetary goals. This would help companies retain both talent and experience. The recognition of qualities like leadership ability and group coordination will ensure greater dynamism in performance.

C Gopinath Nair Kochi

Letters can be mailed, faxed or e-mailed to: The Editor, Business Standard Nehru House, 4 Bahadur Shah Zafar Marg New Delhi 110 002 Fax: (011) 23720201 E-mail: letters@bsmail.in All letters must have a postal address and telephone number

HAMBONE



© Graphic Syndication, England

Digital tax breakthrough

But the road to a common tax code still has several hurdles

The consensus at the G-20 Summit in Fukuoka, Japan, on levying taxes on digital multinational corporations promises to lead to a tectonic shift in the way the global economy works. The devil will be in the detail before this in-principle agreement can be codified into a common taxation system that is accepted across multiple jurisdictions. In addition, the US, home to most of the world's digital giants, is opposed to the new proposal, which is being championed by the UK and France, among others. In that sense, the proposed deadline of 2020 for stitching together a common digital tax code may be unrealistic. However, this consensus should mean that the tax incidence on large multinational online businesses will rise. This will also limit the comparative advantage of small tax havens in attracting a certain kind of companies.

Global digital companies such as Google, Facebook, Amazon, Apple and others face criticism for cutting their tax bills by booking profits in low-tax countries, regardless of the location of the end customer. Such practices are blatantly unfair. The companies rely on a broad theme of tax avoidance. They tend to locate regional headquarters in countries like Ireland, Botswana and Luxembourg, where tax rates are low. As a result, profits made on revenues derived from doing business in other nations are taxed at lower rates. The G-20 proposal could attempt to impose a common minimum tax on such profits. Or, it may try to achieve an international consensus that such profits should be liable to tax in places where the revenue is generated, regardless of the corporate's physical presence. The other option being considered is to have an agreement to reallocate profits registered in one nation, across all the other nations where that profit may be derived.

But there are several hurdles to achieving such a consensus in practice. One is that there is no broadly accepted definition of a digital company. In many cases, the companies in question also have multiple revenue streams from different segments. For example, it may be selling physical goods (which could be sourced either from within a given nation, or imported from elsewhere). Such a company may also be providing cloud-hosting services while running servers located elsewhere, or it may be deriving advertising revenues from nation "A" while displaying content generated in nation "B", and it may be running fintech services across borders as well. All this will further complicate definitions of "digital" businesses.

To properly assess tax incidence across borders, and to prevent either tax evasion by companies, or double taxation by the authorities, there would have to be high levels of cooperation between national tax authorities and, probably, access to cross-border data for verification purposes. This will also be extremely complicated due to demands from many nations (including India, China and Russia) that data collected from their respective citizens should be stored and processed within their national borders. Given wide variations in national privacy legislation and in local digital infrastructure, this could well become a sticking point in negotiations.

Despite the hurdles on the ground, the G20 communique marks an important change in the global attitude to digital businesses. It should, eventually, result in consequent changes to tax codes. It would favour big markets such as India and South Africa, over small tax-havens such as Botswana. This seems to be the fairer option: The nation where the revenue is generated should have the first call in terms of taxing the profits as well.

Stop the violence

Mamata Banerjee has set the state on a perilous course

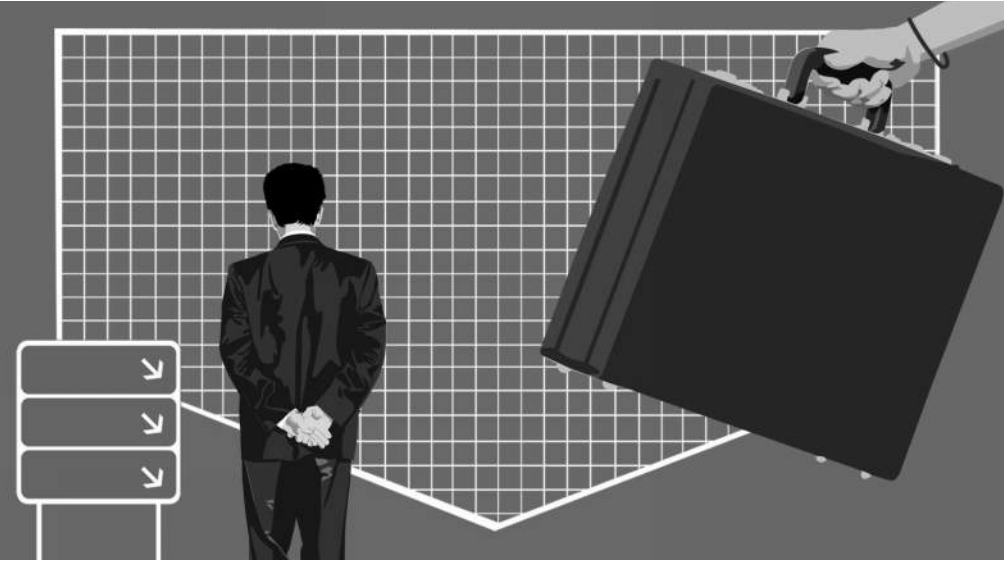
From her days as an opposition activist, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee has worn her reputation for unrelenting feistiness as a badge of honour. Against the tired, old men of the Left Front, her energetic defence of those who lost land to industrial projects propelled her to two terms in power. Against the juggernaut of grassroots mobilisation by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in the recent parliamentary elections, however, she has played into the hands of her opponents and has created conditions for communally-charged confrontation that the state has not seen since 1947. To be sure, violence has been the leitmotif of political engagement in West Bengal since the sixties. The nature of Left Front rule accentuated this; land redistribution policies, which kept it in power for over three decades, also created a powerful, disaffected class of land losers.

This incipient unrest, coupled with militant trade unionism, compelled business to take its capital elsewhere, making the state a case study on the perils of communist governance. In her eight years in power, Ms Banerjee has not changed this basic feature of local politics, and accentuated and reoriented it. Well-publicised investor summits and scouting trips to Singapore did nothing to allay investor fears about endemic violence. Instead, for no discernible reason, she chose to channel her politics to the Muslim community, which accounts for 27 per cent of the state's population. This in itself was a dangerous route to choose when the wounds of Partition are still to heal; when she chose to appease the community's more fundamentalist elements with subsidies the state could ill afford, she alienated those who saw in her a viable secular alternative to the Left Front.

At the same time, the absence of gainful employment opportunities drove the feckless youth, who once provided the muscle power for the Left Front, to divide their allegiance between the Trinamool Congress and the moneyed BJP. West Bengal, thus, became a battleground of competing political thuggery, and the elections saw an unprecedented level of violence and poll-related deaths. Instead of countering the BJP's new-found strength with a cogent campaign as Naveen Patnaik did in neighbouring Odisha, Ms Banerjee escalated the violence, carrying matters to such absurd lengths as preventing BJP President Amit Shah from campaigning and attacking BJP workers, prompting the Election Commission to ban all campaigning 48 hours before the vote.

Voters in this multicultural state responded to Ms Banerjee's inept politics by increasing the BJP's seat-strength from two in 2014 to 18. But she appears not to have learnt any lessons. Oblique post-poll poetry and her personal roadside intervention to prevent BJP workers from chanting slogans made her appear ridiculous. Her failure to rein in her goons resulted in the deaths of BJP workers in Muslim-dominated constituencies. Unabated post-poll violence has provided the BJP's triumphal Home Minister Amit Shah with a useful opportunity to raise the threat of President's rule. With the Assembly elections due in two years, Ms Banerjee has a mountain to climb in terms of altering the deleterious political climate she has done much to foster. In 2011, she created a Left-Front-*mukt* West Bengal. At the moment, she seems to be doing her best to allow the BJP to make it a Trinamool Congress-*mukt* West Bengal in 2021.

ILLUSTRATION: BINAY SINHA



Facing another slowdown

Finance ministry has at last admitted the economy is slowing — so what will govt do?

In spite of optimistic forecasts about a packed "100-day agenda" for the re-elected government of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, it is unlikely that a new and comprehensive reform agenda will be revealed.

This is for three basic reasons. First, the personnel involved do not inspire these expectations. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, for example, while unquestionably competent, did not distinguish herself as a reformist in her previous stint in an economic ministry, namely the Union ministry of commerce. Second, there is a rhetorical reversal implicit in revealing a reform agenda which this government will struggle with. Over the course of an election campaign, it argued that it had already implemented far-reaching reform and that the economy was therefore prospering. To now inform the nation that major economic reform needed to be instituted would constitute something of a contradiction, and the government's messaging mavens would not be pleased. Finally, it is unlikely that decision-makers see the need for reform in the first place, given that the government's handling of its first term resulted in an increased majority.

In many countries, elections are fought over specific policy programmes. Some parties or candidates wish to address health care or tax evasion through one set of policies; their opponents have a different view on which policies would work, and what the priorities are. Unfortunately, the election that India has just undergone, like the one before it, was in fact relatively free of discussion of these matters. As a consequence,

we had no idea in 2014 what Prime Minister Narendra Modi would do, and no idea what he will do now. This is a weakness of India's democratic process that must be accepted. It means not only that there is little scrutiny of a policy agenda before a politician is given power, but also that frequently a policy agenda is only created after the politician gains power — and valuable time is lost in the process.

What is important to note is that the Union finance ministry has at last admitted that growth is slowing in the Indian economy. There have been three successive quarters of slowing economic growth, according to the latest numbers for gross domestic product or GDP. This means that, at the very least, processes must kick in within the government to address this slowdown. The last slowdown under Narendra Modi happened at a politically sensitive time, when the government was trying to manage the narrative, so it was largely denied. This one has a better chance of being addressed. Even if there was no real incentive or desire to reform earlier, the prospect of a slowdown might at least galvanise the government into some moves that could benefit the economy in the long term.

The finance ministry blames the slowdown on three components of GDP: Private consumption, fixed investment and exports. This mirrors the general belief that, while exports and private investment have been in crisis for some years, consumption and state invest-



POLICY RULES

MIHIR SHARMA

Modi 2.0's new clothes

Less than 24 hours after the swearing-in of the new Narendra Modi government was all it took for the Sanskrit saying, "the daydreams of the desperate dissolve no sooner than they form", to sink in. Hopes of radical approaches to some of the daunting problems of India, kindled by the massive electoral endorsement Mr Modi received, were belied by the choice of ministers heading some key tasks.

The economy has been slowing down for over a year now, but Mr Modi and his government had been in (election-induced) denial. All bad news was met with rejection, spin or worse still, suppression. But you can do it only so long before reality catches up, as it did the day after the poll results came out.

Private consumption, for long the principle engine of Indian growth, is sputtering. Those who can afford to, have had their fill of cars, bikes, refrigerators, washing machines and kitchen gadgets. Those who can't, have satisfied themselves with mobile phones. We do not believe in creative destruction and flog our gizmos and doodads until they die. The industry, facing mostly just a replacement demand, thus has excess capacity, even in automobiles, something that hasn't happened in over two decades. With relatively high effective real interest rates, it is none too keen to invest. Infrastructure creation is constrained by government funds stretched to meet wage (and increasing pension) bills, interest payments and various subsidy/welfare schemes. A slowdown was inevitable, no matter how deeply in the sand the Modi Sarkar buried its head *phir ek bar!*

A debutant batter can hardly be expected to hit boundaries right from the time of stepping up to the crease in a key match. That is what poor Nirmala Sitharaman is supposed to be doing. With all due

respect to her demonstrated administrative acumen, she has to learn on the job, but this is not quite the time to do so.

The newly formed Jal Shakti ministry has a catchy title (Mr Modi's hallmark) and brings under one roof all the concerns regarding water. They are formidable and fiercely challenging. Mihir Shah has just begun a column detailing these in these pages. To summarise, we face uncertain monsoons, our major renewable source of water. Ground water has been

mercilessly exploited over time without adequate replenishment. It is now at alarmingly low levels in most of the country. Agriculturists waste water unmindful of its scarcity, yet no policy measures are in place to stop this. Most waterways, including the holiest of all, the Ganga, are polluted beyond belief. Most dams regularly dry up every summer. Riparian states believe in beggar-thy-neighbour, ready to go to war for water. *Nal se jal* is an attractive vote-catching motto, but is fraught. The *nal* (piping) part is easy. Surely we shall soon see impressive completion statistics. But what about the *jal*? When cities with long history of piped water supply are going dry, where will far-flung villages get it from? Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, the minister in charge, is doubtless an honourable man, but what we know of his domain expertise and experience is as scanty as precipitation in this summer of our discontent.

The human resources development ministry was given to someone who was articulate but only tangentially connected with education and then an earnest but unimaginative *pracharak* in Modi 1.0. We now have a self-satisfied poet-politician, Ramesh Pokhriyal, heading it, which should cause us all the greatest concern regarding not just our immediate but long-term future as well. He extolled the virtues



ET CETERA

SHREEKANT SAMBRANI

ment was keeping the economy buoyant. That is, however, an unsustainable model over time. Governments run out of money and fiscal space if they try to prop up economies alone; and consumption cannot boom in the absence of other strong fundamentals.

The mistake would be to, at this stage, focus on reviving consumption rather than the other two components named by the finance ministry. It is the long-term structural damage done to investment and to exports that needs to be addressed, not the consequent failure of consumption.

When it comes to private investment, the simplest diagnosis, and the one that many in government continue to believe, is that the problem lies with the financial sector — in particular, banks. Like all governments before it, this one also believes that lower interest rates are a panacea. If only interest rates were lower then all the problems that it has created through its own actions for business would be rendered irrelevant. Unfortunately, banks are slow to lower their interest rates even when the Reserve Bank of India is willing to play along and cut the headline rate. The problem, however, is that cleaning up the banking system, in such a manner that they are able to more easily transmit lower interest rates to their customers, is not a straightforward positive from the point of view of the government. On the one hand lower rates and healthy banks would be good for investment in the long term. But, on the other hand, creating healthy balance sheets for banks would require continued strictness about bad debt. This nobody is prepared to countenance — witness the RBI's decision to relax its requirements for the reporting of bad debts. The long and short-term solutions are at war in this case.

Exports also might suffer from a misdiagnosis of the structural problem. Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal is absolutely right to declare that the central problem for exports is that they are uncompetitive. But the question is: Why? Mr Goyal further argued that interest cost issues were a problem for exporters. No doubt the price of capital is high for many of them, especially when compared to those from places with non-market financial structures like the People's Republic of China. So, also, are the prices of other basics: Land and skilled labour. The government has done well to improve the supply of power, and of basic infrastructure. But this has clearly not been enough to revive exports, which have been largely flat in real terms through the National Democratic Alliance's tenure. A revival in exports could be sufficient to push the incentive to invest higher as well, and permanently pull India out of its current slowdown. But that will need competitiveness-boosting reform that helps all tradeable sectors — not some tinkering around the edges with subsidies, interest or tax rates for exporters. India has waited too long for central reform of land and labour law. It cannot afford to wait much longer.

mihir.sharma@bsmail.in; Twitter: @mihirsharma

of astrology as a premier science in a parliamentary speech in December 2014. In the follow-up interview with NDTV's Nidhi Kulpati, he was quite aggressive in claiming our ancient knowledge of plastic surgery, nuclear science and all other things the world discovered much, much later. Ergo, we shall soon leapfrog into vanguard positions in robotics, artificial intelligence and all the other fields that the world is making great strides in. Why waste years on sustained research, when we have unimpeachable ancient lores?

Education not only does not receive adequate resources but has been treated as the parking slot for inconvenient politicians for more than three decades. We have turned out whole generations of millions of students with zero skill or analytical abilities, as Harvard Professor Lant Pritchett has repeatedly observed. The new education policy document warns of a severe learning crisis, but does the good Dr Ramesh Pokhriyal, obviously blissed at his appointment, see it as such?

Water and education are two areas where India, like some dissolute millionaire heirs, has recklessly drawn on its future riches for dubious present gains. After the last cabinet reshuffle in Modi1.0, this column had observed, "Mr Modi has shown an enormous penchant for risks that would deter most other politicians and emerge the winner." ("Reading Mr Modi's mind," *Business Standard*, September 12, 2017). He has done so again by choosing S Jaishankar for the sensitive external affairs ministry. That he did not care to show the same serendipity in tapping the large pool of talented non-partisan persons to help him deal with these concerns at their crisis points is cause to worry.

Critics galore, including yours truly, but no knights in shining armour with proven competence are on the horizon. So we are out on a limb, on a wing and a prayer.

The writer is an economist

The art of happiness



BOOK REVIEW

VIKRAM JOHRI

In *The Subtle Art of Not Giving a F*ck*, author Mark Manson evaluated the connections between hope, pain and suffering and how those emotions tie in with success. In the book under review, he takes those discussions up a notch by distilling these ideas on a largely philosophical plane.

Mr Manson starts off by presenting a generalised view of human psychology, dividing our consciousness into a

Thinking Brain, the rational mind that takes logical decisions, and the Feeling Brain, its emotional complement that governs our feelings. He dovetails this distinction into a thoughtful discussion about the mechanism of hope and its place in our world.

One of Mr Manson's main arguments is the paradox of prosperity. He argues that over the past century, the West has experienced material progress of an order that was historically unimaginable. From physical security to the fruits of modernity, most Westerners now enjoy an existence that is far better than anything experienced by previous generations.

Yet, despair is on the rise. As communities break down and the pull of religion loosens, there is greater atomisation in society, which has people scampering for meaning and purpose

in their lives. Mr Manson argues that the promises of modernity have made the West materially richer but have also left it spiritually wanting.

The way out of this conundrum, he suggests, is to live an examined life. He speaks of meditation as a mechanism to broaden our consciousness, to let the full force of the past and the current moment wash over us, and help us reach a place of quiet where our need to be constantly on the run for the next thing to buy or consume dissipates.

In making his case, Mr Manson enlists the help of a bevy of philosophers. A chapter called "The Formula of Humanity" comes from the Kantian idea that the driving force behind our actions should be other people and their welfare. He also flips Newton's three laws of mechanics into rules of well-being.

In truth, the scope of AI thus developed leads less to such outcomes than it does to an ecosystem where repetitive tasks will be increasingly taken over by software, leaving humans to apply their creativity — of which consciousness is an essential part, something AI lacks — to new and as yet unexplored frontiers. *Everything is F*cked* is, like its predecessor, a book that slyly subverts the brio of its title to present arguments and offer solutions that call for a greater, ever-present and active engagement with a rapidly changing world. Mr Manson is an optimistic writer with a deep belief in humanity's myriad gifts and no amount of irony, literary or otherwise, can challenge this basic claim.

EVERYTHING IS F*CKED: A Book about Hope

Mark Manson

HarperCollins

Price: ₹499, 273 pages

RBI does well not to water down NPA resolution norms

Banks have a lot more flexibility when it comes to stressed assets but will be penalised for delays

WHILE THE NEW guidelines on stressed assets put out by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) do alter the timelines for a clutch of projects where resolution is under way, lenders now have more flexibility on how to deal with the asset and maximise recoveries. At the same time, the central bank has done well to reiterate that it retains the powers, under Section 35AA of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949, to direct banks to initiate insolvency proceedings for specific borrowers. This is important to ensure that big defaulters—especially willful defaulters—don't get away. Indeed, those companies that tried to stall the insolvency process in the courts—the Allahabad High Court had declared the February 12 circular *ultra vires*—will find they have not gained too much by delaying the process, and that the one-day default being scrapped is a small reprieve. This is because it is unlikely there will be any other solution that banks can come up with, other than referring these accounts to the NCLT.

The central bank must be credited for not having watered down the norms and for having put in place incentives for lenders to take speedy action; RBI has also warned banks against ever-greening accounts, a common practice in the past. That it now allows bankers to classify an account as a default only after 30 days of the borrower not having serviced the loan, by scrapping the one-day default rule, would have come as a relief. This gives them a little more time to address the problem in the initial stages, though ideally bankers should be in a position to red-flag stress early on and not be ambushed by a default.

Banks also need not necessarily choose the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC) option if the resolution plan cannot be implemented in 210 days—including the 30 day review period. But there is an incentive to speed up the resolution, since otherwise, the account would see accelerated provisioning—additional 20% at the end of 210 days and 35% by 365 days. Once the case has been filed with the NCLT, for the initiation of insolvency proceedings, 50% of the additional provisions can be reversed and, once the NCLT admits the case, 100% can be reversed. The provisions can be reversed, also, once the resolution plan has been fully implemented, for instance, if this is achieved via a restructuring or a change in ownership outside of the purview of the IBC.

RBI has also attempted to minimise delays by asking lenders to sign an inter-creditor agreement (ICA), though this may not be easily achieved, since many of the smaller lenders are reluctant to agree to the terms. However, for decisions to be binding, they must be agreed to by 75% of lenders by value and 60% by number; in other words 100% of the lenders need not agree. The central bank has also made it clear that where there is a change in ownership, the new promoters should not be, in any way, related to the existing promoter or promoter group—whether a person, an entity, a subsidiary and so on. Of course, they should not be barred under Section 29A of the IBC either. That these conditions have been clearly stipulated, is welcomed, because there have been instances where relatives of existing promoters have attempted to regain control through related parties.

Address farmers' GM issues

Govt's GM policy defies logic, hurts farmer interests

AS FARMERS UNDER the umbrella of the Shetkari Sangathana start their civil disobedience movement and plant the banned Herbicide Tolerant (HT) GM seeds as well as Bt brinjal, chances are the authorities will treat this as yet another law and order issue and will arrest them; it is, however, not a simple law and order issue. Of course, farmers cannot be allowed to break the law, but it is also true that their protest is against an irrational and farmer-unfriendly policy; more than anything else, it is yet another attempt to get the government to see sense and reverse its policies; indeed, given the prime minister's avowed goal of doubling farmers' incomes, the government's policy on GM make even less sense.

The advantages of Bt cotton in raising crop yields and farmer profits are well known, and that is why almost all India's cotton acreage is based on Bt cotton; and as a result of productivity surge, India is one of the world's largest exporter of cotton. Despite this, however, government policy seemed targeted at Monsanto, the primary supplier of GM technology seeds in the country. First, a price cap was put on Bt cotton seed prices even though it is not clear which farmer group was protesting about the prices being too high; had prices been high, it is unlikely the technology would have been embraced the way it was. After this, an attempt was made to put a cap on Monsanto's royalties and, for good measure, Additional Solicitor General Tushar Mehta even explained to the court, in a case where the government was not even a party, that the patent issued to Monsanto by India's Patent Office was illegal! And while this behaviour led Monsanto to abandon its plans to bring in the next level of technology involving HT seeds, it was found that farmers had embraced this technology—albeit illegally—in a big way and that 15-20% of the seeds sold today are illegal HT seeds. While the seed price control order has further reduced the price of Monsanto Bt seeds to ₹730 per bag, farmers are paying a much higher ₹1,200-1,500 per bag of the HT seeds as they find their technology useful. Interestingly, while the government was first investigating Monsanto for bringing in the illegal seeds, a government panel has opined that it was local seed firms who were responsible for this.

In the case of Bt brinjal, similarly, it remains true that all tests were conducted in the country over seven years, after which the Genetic Engineering Approval Committee (GEAC) approved it as fit for human use. When several NGOs and others protested against the GEAC report, the UPA's environment minister, Jairam Ramesh decided not to give the final go-ahead. Meanwhile neighbouring countries like Bangladesh have given approval and are cultivating Bt Brinjal. While the government is within its rights to arrest Shetkari Sangathana farmers for breaking the law—they will then have to arrest thousands of farmers who are using HT seeds already—surely it owes the country an explanation for why its policies are so anti-farmer?

UPpressive

The arrests of Prashant Kanojia and others for content related to Yogi Adityanath smacks of authoritarianism

THE ARREST OF three journalists and two others on assorted charges for “objectionable content” relating to Uttar Pradesh chief minister Yogi Adityanath is patently unlawful and amounts to a draconian misuse of laws and arrest powers by the state. Independent journalist Prashant Kanojia had shared, with an off-colour comment, a news report featuring a woman claiming to be in a relationship with the Uttar Pradesh chief minister—Ishita Singh and Anuj Shukla of Nation Live, a news-channel that broadcast the woman's claims, along with Kanojia, were arrested by UP Police. Kanojia, as per the FIR in the matter, has been charged with criminal defamation, a non-cognisable offence, and under Section 66 of the IT Act, a cognisable offence, that relates to fraudulently/dishonestly damaging a computer system. However, while Section 66 requires that certain conditions be fulfilled for making an arrest without a warrant, the charge doesn't even seem relevant in Kanojia's case. And, while a defamation complaint, as per the law, has to be filed by a private aggrieved party before a Magistrate, the UP Police, in this case, took *suo motu* cognisance of Kanojia's and the others' “offence”. What's worse, following the outrage over the arrests, UP Police issued a statement that adds charges under Section 505 of IPC, pertaining to the restriction of the freedom of speech on the grounds of public order and Section 67 of the IT Act that deals with electronic transmission of obscene material—perhaps in a bid to make the arrest look credible retrospectively, since both charges are cognisable—but these, too, don't hold much water. Little in Kanojia's tweet threatens public order or can be deemed obscene, even if it is distasteful.

The summary arrest over the content smacks of blatant abuse of power. In recent times, ruling parties across the political spectrum have displayed such draconian tendencies, from Manipur arresting a journalist for criticising the PM and the CM to the West Bengal Police arresting an opposition party worker for sharing a meme featuring CM Mamata Banerjee, and Karnataka CM threatening a law against journalists for unpalatable news. Such heavy-handedness of the state not only endangers individuals' fundamental freedoms but also erodes public trusts in law enforcement. Even if a genuine offense, of the nature the UP Police believes, did occur, due process can't be given the short-shrift. This is not only illiberal, but seems downright authoritarian.

NEW RBI GUIDELINES

THE REPLACEMENT OF THE RBI FEBRUARY 12, 2018 CIRCULAR ON INSOLVENCY WAS LONG AWAITED AND THE NEW GUIDELINES RELEASED ON JUNE 7, 2019 ARE INTERESTING

RBI now nudges instead of pushing

WHEN ECONOMISTS BUILD theories, one is always quite amazed, because they are

rich in ideas and content. In the last decade or so, behavioural economists have taken over the science to link outcomes with collective human behaviour, which has made theories more appetising. Richard Thaler won the Nobel Prize for the theory of 'nudging', which is what all players in the market experience. People can be nudged to take insurance cover or to invest in a pension fund to plan for retirement. Regulators also have their job cut out when rules are laid down for playing the game. At times, the players get out of control and it may not always be possible to force punitive action. But, the rules can be so framed that players can be 'nudged' to behave in a particular manner. It is against this background that one can view the recent circular of RBI on resolution of stressed assets.

The replacement of RBI February 12, 2018 circular on insolvency was long awaited and the new guidelines released on June 7, 2019 are interesting. The main bone of contention was the one-day default recognition and the forced resolution through IBC, in case a solution was not found in a time-bound manner. This was set aside by the Supreme Court which, now, is not a part of the process to be followed. This is good news for companies, which found themselves in a position of disadvantage when the February 12 circular was invoked. Banks, too, were not comfortable with the outcome even though the onus was not on them, as their books looked more vulnerable.

Now, one gets 30 days to review the default and draw up a resolution plan which could, at the limit, also mean



considering insolvency, depending on what the lenders deem fit. Therefore, the time period has been extended and opens the door to finding a more agreeable solution. But this will get reported to the central repository so that everyone is in the loop regarding the status of the loan. A period of 180 days is given for the resolution process, failing which, the provisions that have to be made by all concerned banks increases by 20% and further by 15% in case 365 days pass. In the earlier dispensation, after 180 days, the IBC shadow loomed, where, at the extreme, the promoter could lose ownership of the company. Now, taking the company to IBC is an option, but not mandatory.

The inter-creditor agreement is important here, whereby 75% of the o/s facility by value and 60% of the lenders must agree on a resolution plan. In the earlier dispensation, 100% agreement was required, which was always a challenge. By lowering the majority required, the procedure becomes more doable. However, this will definitely tilt the bias towards the larger lenders, who would tend to take decisions on this issue, while the smaller players would be at a disadvantage and have less power to guide the final call. As this applies to not just commercial banks but also small banks and NBFC-SI, it will be interesting to see how this works. Usually, the smaller players are happy to go with

the larger lenders as the onus is on the others to take a call. Therefore, this may not make a material difference at the end of the day.

The decision, now, has to be taken by the banks and not RBI. This is the fundamental shift in stance. How will this work? If banks think that the case has to be referred to the IBC, they would follow the earlier path. But in the past, banks were loath to drag companies to the IBC of their own volition, because it would mean taking haircuts that were not agreeable. Therefore, it made sense to kick the can and procrastinate, and the various channels that were available, like JLF, S4A, ARC, CDR, SDR etc., were routes that could be explored. This made the decision-making process much more difficult. It was always difficult to find a solution as the lender wanted the lowest haircut and the buyer the highest. This made attaining equilibrium difficult. The restructuring process had its set of idiosyncrasies, where the decision was taken by the lenders to ensure that the loan was not called an NPA. The tenures would be extended and the interest rates lowered to make it bearable, but in the process, it became hard to dis-

It is not quite sure as to how this will work out in the times to come. But the RBI has plugged this gap in a very innovative way

tinguish between ever-greening and genuine restructuring, as there was always a perverse incentive to keep the loan looking good through this avenue.

It is not quite sure as to how this will work out in the times to come. But, RBI has plugged this gap in a very innovative way, knowing completely well that escape clauses run the risk of slippage. A deterrent on the procrastination possibility has been the provisioning norm that could go up to 35% in case of a year passing. Therefore, there would be some incentive to actually have a resolution plan which works in place.

RBI does come out quite fairly in this process, for even though there is no force being deployed, the nudge has been provided through the provisioning route. As banks do have problems on capital, they probably have to look at the most efficient ways of moving towards a resolution. RBI has given the power to the banks to decide, but has put in the required caveats to ensure that they act in a

proper manner and do not delay the decision making process. Hence, this appears to be a better way out, as banks can no longer sit back and let things take their course. By abolishing all earlier schemes for resolution, the doors have actually been closed and lenders have been forced to find a solution within the rules framed by the RBI for this purpose. As it is within the norms of central bank regulation, there can really be no objection. This nudge may be as good as the push that was earlier dominant in the approach.

OPEC, the future is probably worse

A Morgan Stanley report published last week argued that “there is growing evidence of a sharper-than-expected slowdown” in oil demand growth

SAUDI ARABIA AND Russia are on a collision course. On Friday the International Energy Agency will publish its first forecast of oil market balances in 2020. The headline figures will probably show stockpiles rising next year if the OPEC+ producer group doesn't extend output cuts into a fourth year. But their pain may not end there. Growing signs that demand growth is turning out to be much weaker than expected may require producers to make even deeper cuts. If so, that could spell the end of the partnership between Saudi Arabia and Russia on oil policy.

The production restraint agreed in November and December 2016 by OPEC and a group of supporting countries—Russia was the only one that offered a substantial voluntary reduction—was meant to drain excessive inventories and bring global supply and demand into balance during the first six months of 2017.

By mid-2019 that still hasn't happened, despite a prolonged period of relatively robust demand growth that has seen the world's oil consumption increase at an average rate of 1.4% per year over the period from 2017 through 2019, according to the most recent IEA figures. That's equivalent to around 1.33 million barrels a day of additional demand each year.

But the IEA has made a big cut to its assessment of oil demand in the first quarter. While the annual average figure hasn't come down much, the move is worrying because it covers the only period for which we have any real data on consumption. The assessment may be cut further as more numbers come in and reductions to forecasts will almost certainly follow for subsequent periods.

Speaking at the St Petersburg International Economic Forum Friday, Russian oil minister Alexander Novak suggested that the trade wars could help push global demand growth this year

below 1 million barrels a day. That would be the lowest level since 2011.

A Morgan Stanley report published last week argued that “there is growing evidence of a sharper-than-expected slowdown” in oil demand growth. Year-on-year increases are “grinding to a halt” across March and April for eight early-reporting countries, including China, India and the U.S. That is worrying because the IEA expects those three countries alone to account for 70% of the world's oil demand growth this year.

So where does that leave the producers? Whenever they next meet, it is almost certain they will decide to extend the current policy of restraint until the end of the year.

Sure, there may be some tweaks to the actual target levels for some countries—Kazakhstan wants to be able to produce more, as output rises from its giant Kashagan field. Russian oil companies also want restrictions eased, but any decision will ultimately rest with President Vladimir Putin, not the country's energy industry.

But just extending the current deal may not be enough. The OPEC+ group has adopted stockpiles as its measure of success, with the focus shifting from the relatively opaque global figure to the highly visible U.S. inventory numbers, published each week.

The latest figures from the Department of Energy made grim reading for the producer group. Total inventories of crude and refined products soared by 22.44 million barrels in the last week of May—the biggest week-on-week increase in data going back almost 30 years. And that wasn't the only worrying number.

Monthly data for the first quarter

and initial weekly assessments for April and May show U.S. oil demand falling year on year in three out of five months so far in 2019.

The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development estimates that trade tensions have already cost the world close to 1 percentage point of growth. The OECD last month cut its global forecast for 2019 economic expansion to 3.2% from 3.9%. With demand growth tied closely to economic growth, these cuts bode ill for oil consumption.

Although both the Saudi Arabian and Russian oil ministers talked up the benefits of the OPEC+ deal at the St Petersburg forum, Russia's President Vladimir Putin had earlier asserted that the two countries “have certain differences in opinion regarding the fair price” for crude. The Russian leader says \$60-65 a barrel—which is around the current level—“suits us just fine.”

While the OPEC+ ministers may be able to get away with extending their deal for another six months, a crunch is going to come when Russia decides it has had enough of restraint. For now, export restrictions resulting from the lingering contamination problems with its export pipeline to Europe are helping keep the nation's output below its target, but once that is resolved, the industry will once again press to boost production.

Even Putin may balk at asking Russian oil companies to make deeper cuts to support prices. If he does, the OPEC+ cooperation will start to unravel.

This column does not necessarily reflect the opinion of the editorial board of Bloomberg LP and its owners

JULIAN LEE

Bloomberg

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Bengal violence

No time can be now lost for the de-escalation of political violence in West Bengal. There is nothing more important than human survival. No civilised society can countenance killings of humans for political reasons. BJP is in a hurry to gain power in the state and creating unrest towards this end. There is no other explanation for its escalating the confrontation with TMC. Its return to power at the Centre and it winning an unexpected 18 seats on Mamata Banerjee's turf seem to have emboldened the party to unleash a series of protests to dislodge Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee. The attempt by BJP to bring the bodies to Kolkata was not justified as it was clearly intended to whip up tension. It is obvious to anyone that BJP is engineering unrest to establish that law and order has broken down in the state. The Shah-Mamata rivalry must be kept within limits. The endless cycle of violence claims the lives of members and supporters of both TMC and BJP. The leaderships of both the parties should appeal to the party cadres to put an end to violence and ensure that no life is lost in the battle for political power. The perpetrators and the victims of political violence, of whichever party they are affiliated to, are always from the impoverished social background. The advisory by the Centre, the meetings of Governor with the Prime Minister and the Home Minister and the charge of failure of law enforcement in West Bengal give us an inkling of the possible dismissal of the state government. On its part, the TMC cries foul and vows to not allow BJP to make West Bengal a la Gujarat. The likely imposition of President's rule for which the BJP is preparing the ground is unlikely to stand the judicial scrutiny. Any victory by violence and unconstitutional means will be Pyrrhic and do irreparable damage to democracy.

— G David Milton, Kanyakumari

● Write to us at feletters@expressindia.com

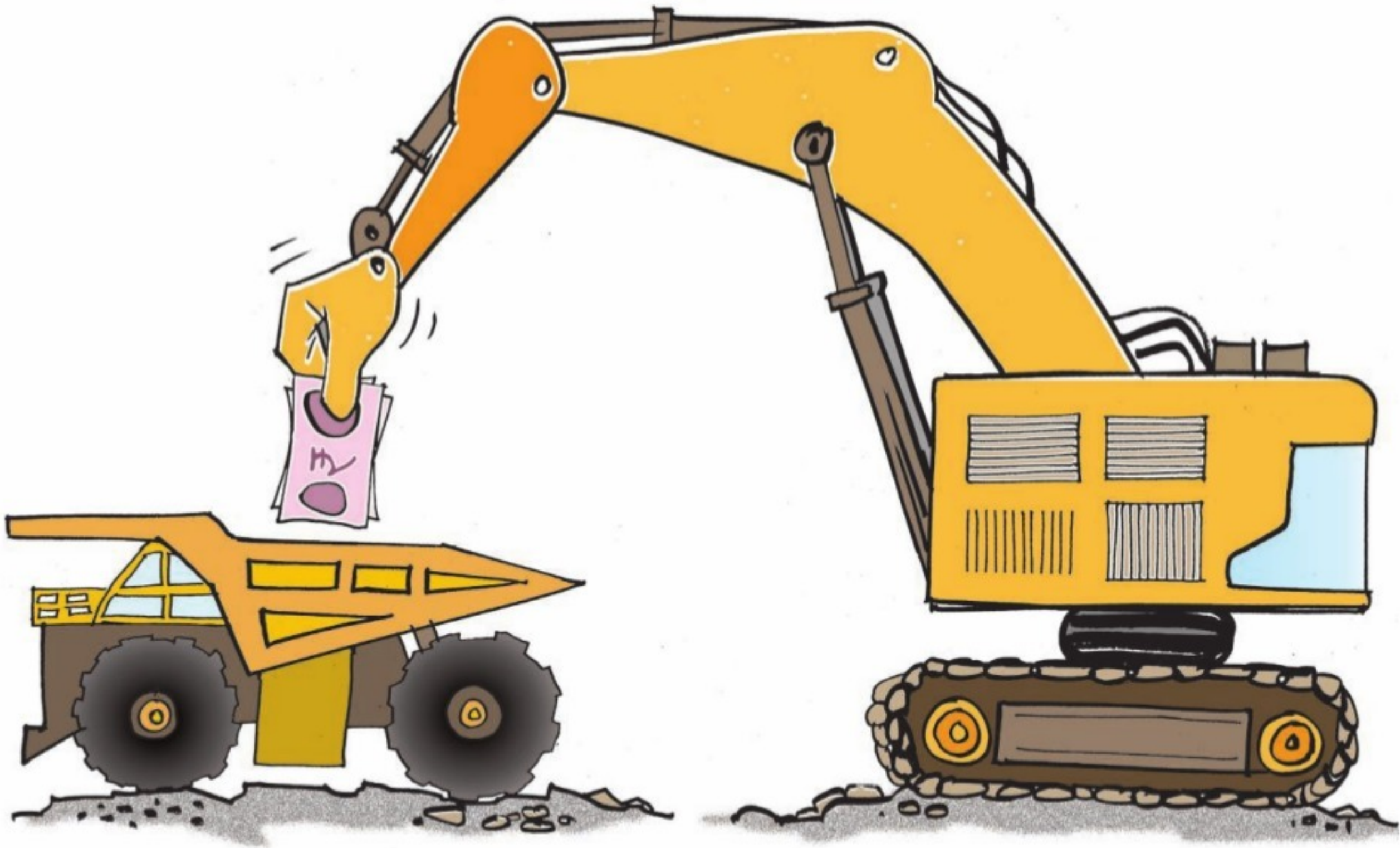


ILLUSTRATION: ROHNIT PHORE

ANIL AGARWAL

Chairman, Vedanta Group



AGENDA FOR NDA 2.0

To 'Make in India', 'Find in India'

Govt must open up key sectors like mining, oil & gas for FDI to aid GDP growth

cient jobs at a time when India needs to encash its demographic dividends are the biggest challenges facing the Narendra Modi government at the start of its second term. While the task is certainly herculean, the government also has the people's vote of confidence to undertake bold reforms, announce tough measures and unleash the nation's true potential to kick start the economy. The government also has the advantage of benign inflation to slash interest rates and ensure ample credit availability to the economy.

The combination of reforms in areas like agriculture, labour and land, coupled with the creation of a conducive investment environment, backed by the easing of tax laws, will surely re-ignite the economy's growth engines. While Modi's mission of 'Make in India' can be taken to the next level with progressive reforms for domestic industries, it is about time we had a mining revolution along the same lines as the Green Revolution and the White Revolution. Given the country's rich and diverse ecology, India should further open up key sectors like mining and oil & gas for copious FDI flows that will not only curb needless imports but also generate millions of jobs at the direct level as well as in ancillary industries.

Thus, 'Make in India' must be supplemented with 'Find in India', where the world's top mining companies with state-of-the-art technology start mining a wide range of metals and minerals, like coal, iron ore, bauxite, oil and gold, in India on a sustainable basis, with utmost care for the environment. Given the wealth of India's untapped resources, if we produce even half the oil and gold we import, we would be a country with a current account surplus. It is on the basis of this enormous potential that we got 41 hydrocarbon blocks in OALP-I and have bid for another 30 blocks in OALP-II and III. We are currently producing around 200,000 barrels of oil per day and intend to double it in two years, aspiring, eventually, to take it up to one million barrels per day, once new blocks start production. At the same time, it is important to strengthen India's position in global trade, while protecting domestic industry from dumping, so that companies are not averse to stepping up investments.

The National Mineral Policy 2019,

approved by the Cabinet in March this year, aims to increase the production of major minerals by 200% in seven years. The target is achievable if the policy is kept absolutely simple and transparent, without a circuitous string of approvals. Further, the policy could be production, and not revenue based, because the entrepreneur or the businessman, who risks their investment, must earn a decent return from the project. The government may focus on the long-term and aim for steady returns, rather than pursuing revenue and profits that force prospective investors to stay away.

Besides tapping into India's natural resources, where the sector's share in GDP can easily go from 2% to 10%, the government may also look to make public sector companies independent. PSUs are our backbone and giving them autonomy will help raise both production and revenues, and create huge employment. We need not privatise them, letting them operate, instead, like an ITC or an L&T, where decisions are taken in the interest of the company, its business and its stakeholders. Lack of independence in PSU functioning has taken away these firms' ability to think on their feet and take strong decisions when required. Today, Indians are running multi-billion dollar corporations across the world, so why can't we do it in India?

The government may only provide an enabling environment and, as stated by the PM, the government has no business to be in business. Further, this decentralisation must travel to the grass root level, where our district collectors are empowered to quicken decision making in vital areas like land, environment and sports. If each district develops, the nation will prosper on its own.

The 2019 mandate is one of hope and faith. Given the vision and mission mode of prime minister Narendra Modi, I am confident that he will take the nation's growth and prosperity to a new level, and that India will emerge as an economic and spiritual hub on the global platform. It is crucial that the nation of 1.3 billion people realises that this is the land of endless possibilities. We must stop India from being only the dumping ground of the world. It is time to 'Find in India', 'Make in India', and sell, both in India and globally!

If we produce even half the oil and gold we import, we would be a country with a current account surplus

THE RETURN OF THE National Democratic Alliance to power in the 2019 Lok Sabha polls showed the pro-incumbency mood of the nation and reflected the voters' deep-trust in prime minister Modi's numerous policies that have benefitted each strata of society since 2014. In fact, the Modi juggernaut defied all expectations and won a second term with an even bigger mandate. It is evident that, at the moment, the average Indian believes that it's only the NDA government that can provide lasting solutions to the problems facing the country—from the dipping GDP growth to waning consumption demand

and from lack of adequate jobs to water scarcity exacerbating the agrarian crisis.

Yet, not all is hunky-dory as NDA-II embarks on its governance journey after a historic win at the hustings. Even as new ministers took charge of their respective ministries on Friday, the jubilation in the government was somewhat tempered by the sharp dip in GDP growth for the last quarter of financial year 2018-19. India's economic growth rate slipped to a five-year low of 5.8% in January-March, while joblessness stood at 6.1% of total labour force during 2017-18, the highest in 45 years.

Clearly, the dipping GDP growth and the economy's inability to create suffi-

WHAT DO WE REMEMBER a writer for? For the written work of course; the answer may seem obvious. But in the case of Girish Karnad, the obvious falls flat. It remains partial. To describe Girish Karnad was in September last year, when he spoke at a literary meet for tolerance—Bengaluru. "A literary meet for tolerance"—these words say much about the daunting task Karnad faced, and that all writers face today. It's no longer enough for a writer to struggle in a private space, making sense, through words and ideas, of the real world and the world of stories; the past and its new lives in the present; the little mysteries of human relationships, and the larger terrors of relationships based on power. More and more it seems, writers also have to speak on the public stage, even march in the streets. This is a difficult thing for most writers to do. But Karnad did it.

He spoke that day, soon after several activists were either arrested or hounded with what he called "fragile, false FIRs"

Giving voice to Girish Karnad

Karnad's art drew energy from our syncretic cultural and historical resources

GITHA HARIHARAN

Founder-member of the Indian Writers' Forum



accusing them of almost anything, from the situation in Kashmir, to the violence at Bhima Koregaon, to an assassination plot against the prime minister. Karnad stood up slowly. A small tank-like object was strapped to his waist, sending him oxygen through tubes connected to his nose. But what he told us went to the heart of the matter. There's a new language among us, he said. The kind of language with words like lynching and urban naxal and anti-nationalist and tukde-tukde. The kind of language that spawns strange, horrible or meaningless words, and makes them the stuff of everyone's lives. This new language distorts politics, the rights of citizens, and their everyday lives -- because language

and action are closely intertwined. This is something a writer like Karnad knew well, and he did not shy away from saying it aloud.

He did not let ill health keep him quiet after that talk either. In April this year, just before the elections, he was among the writers who issued an appeal to citizens to vote out hate politics. He was among the theatre artists who called for bigotry, hatred and apathy to be voted out of power. The election results tell us that his appeals and ours, and our new writerly tasks, are far from done. So now that he is gone, how do we continue to hear Girish Karnad? How do we let his rich voice strengthen ours?



We could begin with the foundation of his creative efforts: His vital connection to the many-tongued world of stories he grew up with, soaking in Marathi theatre, Yakshagana, myths and tales waiting to be made sense of afresh. The myth, he said, "nailed me to my past". But Karnad's powerful relationship with myth and tale was an intelligent one. Out of this resource he drew ways of understanding ourselves in the present. In the Prologue to his first play Yayati, he says, "We turn to ancient lore not because it offers any blinding revelation or hope of consolation, but because it provides fleeting glimpses of the fears and desires... within us. It is a good way to get introduced to ourselves." But Karnad

makes it clear that this introduction through myth will take us forward, because it is firmly rooted in the present, in reason, and in plural ways of seeing: "Our play this evening deals with an ancient myth. But, let me rush to explain, it is not a 'mythological'. Heaven forbid! A mythological aims to plunge us into the sentiment of devotion... Our play has no gods."

We can continue hearing Karnad by recalling his connection to the legacy of mentors such as D R Bendre and V K Gokak who nurtured open discussion, and a sense of community in creative endeavour. We can remember them once again in a time that name-calls intellectuals and crushes their questions. We can recall Karnad's

memory of a cultural centre such as Dharwad—a precious memory in a time when Dharwad has become infamous for the assassination of the scholar M M Kalburgi. Again, in a time when institutions are crumbling under assault, we can remember Karnad's efforts at strengthening public institutions such as the Sangeet Natak Akademi in Delhi, the Film and Television Institute of India in Pune, and the Nehru Centre in London.

Whatever he did, whether as an institutional leader or a writer or an actor or a public intellectual, Girish Karnad lived his chosen narrative. "We must trust the narrative we have chosen for ourselves," he said. "Invent bits if necessary, but go on." His plays are, of course, a part of this narrative. But there is time to go back to them, let each yield new meanings. For now, we need to remember—and keep alive, both for our sakes and in tribute to Karnad—other parts of his chosen narrative. These, taken together, make a narrative with creative and intelligent links with our syncretic cultural and historical resources. It's a narrative that includes large numbers of people speaking in different languages, many of them speaking words of dissent. It's a narrative that returns writers, readers and citizens to the centrestage where they belong, so that they may learn, teach and live what freedom of expression really means. This is the modern narrative we must continue to be part of, not necessarily in Karnad's voice, but in our own.

Removing hurdles

NANDA GOPAL RAJAN

nandagopal.rajan@indianexpress.com



Apple WWDC underlines the company's commitment to accessibility and triggers its developers to innovate

APPL'S WORLD WIDE Developer conference this year was a mixed bag. As always, there were so many announcements that it took a while to take it all in. However, a couple of trends were clear: one, Apple wanted to grow each vertical like the Apple Watch and iPad separately within its larger ecosystem and; two, there was going to be another big push towards accessibility across its devices.

With its new MacOS Catalina, you will be able to literally get things done and navigate around the computer using just simple voice commands. Apple has even split the screen into grids to help users select areas which otherwise don't have buttons, like in case of a map. The whole experience was mind blowing, and looking at it from the perspective of someone with motor disabilities the feature would be game changing, and of course so empowering.

Apple's focus on accessibility seems to have inspired its community of developers, too, especially the younger ones. Palash Tarneja, a student of DPS Rohini in Delhi, was among the select few who got to present their ideas to Apple CEO Tim Cook. Tarneja's creation is a software that translates the audio on YouTube videos in realtime. "My idea was about linguistic accessibility by translating YouTube videos into the native language of the user," he says, adding how this will be especially useful in terms of educational content. "He (Cook) said it was a fantastic idea and he will look into it." Chennai's Sudarshan Sreeram's project this time was a Swift Playground called Amaze. "It's a simple game where you have to navigate your way around a maze within a time limit and collect stuff on the way. But the catch is that each time you reach a collectible, your direction symbols flip," explains Sreeram, adding that the idea was to ensure that toddlers for whom the game is meant don't become habituated to the movements. The game also comes with features that make it accessible for those with colour blindness and even low motor skills. His next project will be to help dexterics.

Apple, meanwhile, is trying to de-hyphenate its products from each other. The Apple Watch, for instance, will now be able to run apps independently, and will not require the iPhone. There will even be an App Store of its own, on the watch. iPad too pulls itself away from the iPhone. The tablet now gets an operating system of its own with very tablet-centric user interface, though based on iOS. The iPadOS will offer multi-tasking and multi-window capabilities along with keyword commands, intuitive gestures and even files folders like on the Mac. Plus, Safari on iPad will offer desktop-type browsing and won't load mobile pages. It seems Apple Park clearly sees the iPad as a bridge-device, a computer for those who don't want to use a larger form factor or can't afford one.

The Mac will, with its next OS upgrade, come even closer to the mobile world. There will be more apps that will run here, like Music, Podcasts and Radio as Apple kills off its iTunes platform. Then, Apple has done something unique with a feature called Sidecar that lets Mac users add the iPad as a new input device. This helps them be more creative with a host of software they would run on their computers, tapping in on the Apple Pencil's capabilities.

With the latest edition of WWDC, Apple has reiterated its commitment to accessibility or, again, not limiting itself to just those who can't hear well or see clearly. This is unique for a smartphone company, but also an acknowledgment that this could be a big user base to tap into. In the process, it is also triggering innovation around accessibility within its large developer community. In an Apple world, tech will be a facilitator for those who otherwise find themselves stuck behind a virtual barrier.

The author is in San Jose on the invite of Apple

Apple is trying to de-hyphenate its products from each other. The Apple Watch, for instance, will now be able to run apps independently, and will not require the iPhone



@ieExplained
#ExpressExplained

If there are questions of current or contemporary relevance that you would like explained, please write to explained@expressindia.com

FACT CHECK, GROUND REALITY

WHY LAKHS ARE PROTESTING ON THE STREETS IN HONG KONG



EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JUNE 10

HUNDREDS OF thousands of protesters dressed in white marched in the streets of Hong Kong Sunday (above) in the biggest protest since the Umbrella Revolution of September-December 2014. Police estimated the number of marchers at 240,000; organisers, said a million people protested. Hong Kong, which at roughly 1,100 sq km is smaller in size than Delhi, is home to an estimated 7.4 million people.

The extradition Bill

The protesters were marching against proposed changes in the law that would allow suspects accused of crimes such as murder and rape to be extradited to mainland China to face trial. Carrie Lam, who became Chief Executive of Hong Kong in 2017 as the candidate favoured by Beijing, is pushing for the amendments to be passed this month.

Once the law is changed, Hong Kong will also hand over to China individuals accused of crimes in Taiwan and Macau. Taiwan has a tense relationship with China; Macau, like Hong Kong, is a Chinese special administrative region with significant autonomy.

The government has said that the proposed amendments would “plug loopholes” that allow the city to be used by criminals. It has assured that courts in Hong Kong would make the final decision on extradition, that only certain categories of suspects would be liable, and that individuals accused of political and religious offences would not be extradited.

Protesters’ concerns

The main worry, government assurances notwithstanding, is that China will use the changed law to target political op-

ponents in Hong Kong. Critics point to China’s flawed justice system and say extradited suspects would likely face torture. Also, they say, the change in the law will deal another blow to Hong Kong’s already crumbling autonomy.

Sunday’s march included people from the business community, lawyers, students, members of religious groups, even housewives.

“This is the end game for Hong Kong, it is a matter of life or death,” a Reuters report quoted a 59-year-old professor as saying. An 18-year-old student was quoted by AFP as saying: “This Bill will not just affect Hong Kong’s reputation as an international finance centre, but also our judicial system. That has an impact on my future.”

A report in the BBC quoted Lam Wing Kee, a Hong Kong bookseller who was detained in China in 2015 for selling books critical of Chinese leaders, as saying he did not trust the Hong Kong government. Lam fled to Taiwan via Hong Kong this April, where he has got temporary residency.

Human Rights Watch and the International Chamber of Commerce have warned against changing the law. A body of the US Congress has said it would make Hong Kong vulnerable to Chinese “political coercion”, and the UK and Canada have expressed concern over the potential impact on their citizens in Hong Kong. The EU has sent a diplomatic note.

Hong Kong and China

The former British colony returned to Chinese rule in 1997, and is semi-autonomous under the “one country, two systems” principle. It has its own laws and courts, and allows its residents a range of civil liberties. Hong Kong does not have an extradition agreement with Beijing. China has decried the alleged “politicisation” of the Hong Kong proposal, and the “interference” in China’s internal affairs.

SIMPLY PUT

How education can be flexible

In National Education Policy draft, committee calls for greater focus on multidisciplinary courses. Other recommendations for higher education include stress on research, regulatory reforms, tech in teaching

RITIKA CHOPRA
NEW DELHI, JUNE 10

IN MONDAY’S editions, *The Indian Express* described the broad recommendations for school education made by a committee set up for drafting a new National Education Policy (NEP). The policy will be finalised and presented in Parliament after taking feedback from various stakeholders. For higher education, the committee’s recommendations include:

Multiple disciplines

The main thrust of the draft policy is on breaking the “rigid boundaries of disciplines” in higher education and moving towards broad-based, flexible learning. Institutions offering single streams (such as technical education) must be phased out, and all universities and colleges must aim to become multidisciplinary by 2030, the report proposes.

“The future workplace will demand critical thinking, communication, problem solving, creativity, and multidisciplinary capability. Single-skill and single-discipline jobs are likely to become automated over time. Therefore, there will be a great need to focus on multidisciplinary and 21st century competencies for future work roles — these are indeed the capabilities that will separate humans from robots,” the report states.

For this, the draft pitches for reintroduction of the four-year undergraduate programme in Liberal Arts Science Education (LASE) with multiple exit options, and scrapping of the MPhil programme. The LASE curriculum will be designed to develop broadly “useful capacities” (critical thinking, communication skills, scientific temper, social responsibilities etc), while offering rigorous education in specialisations (called majors or dual majors) across disciplines.

Pursuing a PhD will require either a Master’s degree or a four-year Bachelor’s degree with research. “The three-year traditional BA, BSc, as well as BVoc degrees will continue as well for those institutions that wish to continue such programmes, but all Bachelor’s degrees will move towards taking a more comprehensive liberal education approach,” the documents states.

The draft policy also proposes building a small number of new liberal arts universities, modelled after Ivy League schools, in the next five years.

Global footprint

The NEP 2018 proposes an increase in the number of off-shore campuses of Indian institutions and permitting the world’s top 200 institutions to set up branches in India, with a new law to regulate the latter’s entry and operation. Indian higher education institu-



Admission in progress at Panjab University in 2018. Jasbir Malhi/Express Archive

tions (HEIs), it states, should be encouraged to offer their distance-learning programmes abroad and enter into international partnerships for research.

Currently, India sends the third largest number of students (over 3 lakh) abroad for higher education. However, only 46,000 foreign students, accounting for less than one per cent of international students worldwide, study in Indian HEIs.

National Research Foundation

The NEP has recommended that a National Research Foundation (NRF), tasked with creating a conducive ecosystem for research through funding and mentoring, should be set up. Funds for research and innovation have fallen from 0.84% of GDP in 2008 to 0.69% in 2014. The draft attributes India’s performance in research to a separation between research institutions and teaching institutions, lack of research culture, lack of funds and poor research capacities of state universities.

The proposed NRF, to be set up by an Act of Parliament as an autonomous institution and with an annual grant of Rs 20,000 crore, will “seed, grow and facilitate research at academic institutions, particularly at universities and colleges where research is currently in a nascent stage...”

Regulatory reforms

The draft proposes a common regulatory regime for the entire higher education sector, “eliminating isolation and disjunction”. As with primary education, it suggests that in higher education, too, the functions of “regulation, provision of education, funding, ac-

creditation and standard setting will be separated, and will not be performed by the same institution or institutional hierarchy”.

The National Higher Education Regulatory Authority (NHERA) will be the sole regulatory authority, while NAAC, along with other accreditation agencies, will oversee accreditation. The existing University Grants Commission, currently regulator as well as grants disbursing agency, will transform into the Higher Education Grants Council (HEGC) and will limit itself to grants giving.

Other regulatory bodies — such as Medical Council of India, Bar Council of India, AICTE, National Council for Teacher Education — will become Professional Standard Setting Boards in their respective fields, without regulatory powers in professional education.

Rashtriya Shiksha Aayog

The draft NEP envisages the creation of a new apex institution for education, through an Act of Parliament, that will be responsible for “developing, articulating, implementing, evaluating, and revising the vision of education in the country on a continuous and sustained basis”.

The Rashtriya Shiksha Aayog (RSA) will be chaired by the Prime Minister and run by executive and advisory bodies, half of which will made up of ministers and the other half of educationists and civil society members. A range of institutions — NRF, NCERT, NHERA, National Testing Agency, Higher Education Grants Council, and state education regulatory authorities, among others — will be reporting to this super organisation.

The Ministry of Human Resource

Development (MHRD), which the report wants re-designated as the Ministry for Education, will have to complement the RSA. “A committee chaired by the UME (Union Minister for Education) and consisting of the ED (Executive Director of RSA) and a few members appointed by the UME will be constituted for this purpose at the earliest. Over a period of time, as the roles and functions stabilise, the RSA will be given Constitutional status through an Act of the Parliament,” the draft states.

Technology in Education

The policy dissects this topic into four broad areas:

■ Training of teachers in the use of educational technology, and use of educational technology for professional development of teachers.

■ Classroom tools and curriculum, such as “computational training”, online course software etc.

■ Access for those disadvantaged students who cannot attend a physical school.

■ Overall educational records management with a National Repository of Educational Data.

The draft policy proposes a National Education Technology Forum, a group of education leaders and government officials to discuss and advise on how to strengthen educational technology, and Centres of Excellence in Educational Technology in prominent institutions.

Other suggestions

■ Public investment in higher education to be raised from the current 10% of overall public expenditure in education to 20%, over a 10-year period.

■ Substandard and dysfunctional technical educational institutions to be closed.

■ Rashtriya Shiksha Aayog to commission a perspective plan for professional education.

■ A quasi-judicial body may be constituted for a mission-mode clean-up of teacher education.

■ The four-year integrated BEd. will, by 2030, become the minimal degree qualification for schoolteachers. All pre-service teacher education programmes will be offered only in multidisciplinary institutions.

■ First year or two of MBBS will be designed as a common period for all science graduates after which they can take up MBBS, BDS, Nursing or other specialisations.

■ A common exit examination for MBBS.

■ All new colleges started from 2020 onwards must only be autonomous colleges. No new affiliated colleges shall be started after 2020. After 2030 there will be no affiliated colleges - all colleges must develop to become autonomous degree granting colleges or a university.

THIS WORD MEANS: NATIONAL PARTY

New status for NPP: what conditions did it meet?

A ‘STATE PARTY’ IN FOUR STATES				
STATE	ASSEMBLY POLL	TOTAL SEATS	NPP WON	VOTE SHARE
Manipur	2017	60	4	5.05%
Meghalaya	2018	59*	19	20.60%
Nagaland	2018	60	5	6.92%
Arunachal	2019	60	5	14.56%

**Meghalaya Assembly has 60 seats; 2018 polls held in 59*

in each of any four states, as well as four seats in the last Lok Sabha polls; or

(ii) 2% of all Lok Sabha seats in the last such election, with MPs elected from at least three states; or

(iii) recognition as a state party in at least four states.

The NPP has satisfied the last of these conditions. It is recognised as a state party in four states — Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur and Nagaland, besides Meghalaya. It has earned that recognition by fulfilling differ-

ent conditions in different states.

For recognition as a state party, any one of five conditions needs to be satisfied. These are specified under paragraph 6A of the Order:

(i) two seats plus a 6% vote share in the last Assembly election in that state; or

(ii) one seat plus a 6% vote share in the last Lok Sabha election from that state; or

(iii) 3% of the total Assembly seats or 3 seats, whichever is more; or

(iv) one of every 25 Lok Sabha seats (or an equivalent fraction) from a state; or

Why Cyclone Vayu is an obstacle to northward progress of monsoon

AMITABH SINHA
PUNE, JUNE 10

JUST OVER a month after the powerful cyclone Fani devastated large areas of Odisha, another cyclone is headed towards India, this time towards the Gujarat coast. Cyclone Vayu - it is still to develop into a cyclone and is only a deep depression as of now - is currently positioned around 250 km northwest of Amini island in Lakshadweep and about 750 km southwest of Mumbai, and is slated to reach the Gujarat coast in two to three days.

Vayu is much weaker than Fani. At its strongest, it is likely to generate winds of speed 110-120 km per hour, according to current forecasts. In contrast, winds associ-

ated with Fani had speeds of about 220 km per hour. Vayu, even at its most powerful, therefore would only be categorised as a “severe cyclonic storm”, while Fani was an “extremely severe cyclonic storm” and almost satisfied the conditions for classification as a “super cyclone”.

Monsoon worries

While Vayu is unlikely to result in widespread destruction, it is a cause for concern for a different reason. It is likely to halt the northward progression of the monsoon for a few days. The arrival of the monsoon has already been delayed, hitting the Kerala coast on June 8 instead of June 1.

The cyclone is expected to interfere with normal progression, by sucking all the moisture from the monsoon winds towards

itself. Cyclones are sustained by very strong low-pressure areas at their core. Winds in surrounding areas are forced to rush towards these low-pressure areas.

Similar low-pressure areas, when they develop near or over land, are instrumental in pulling the monsoon winds over the country as well. But right now, the low-pressure area at the centre of the cyclone is far more powerful than any local system that can pull the monsoon winds moving northeast.

“We will see a brief hiatus in the monsoon progression because of the cyclone. The northward progress, especially in interior areas, would not be possible till the cyclone dissipates. The western coast would continue to have rains during this time, but interior parts would have to wait till two to



The approaching Cyclone Vayu. US Joint Typhoon Warning Center

three days after the cyclone dissipates,” said D Sivananda Pai, head of climate research and services at India Meteorological Department (IMD).

What this means is that the places where the monsoon has already reached would continue to get rain, mainly along the western coastline, but other areas would have to wait a little longer.

K Sathidevi of IMD told *The Indian Express* that according to current forecasts, Vayu was likely to touch the Gujarat coast somewhere near Veeraval and Diu either around midnight of June 12 or early morning of June 13. It is likely to dissipate very fast after that because the land and atmosphere in the area was devoid of any moisture that can sustain it any further. The northward progression of monsoon can be expected two to three days



The Indian EXPRESS

FOUNDED BY

RAMNATH GOENKA

BECAUSE THE TRUTH INVOLVES US ALL

NEIGHBOURS FIRST

PM Modi's visit to Male, Colombo is a reiteration of the principle and bolsters Delhi's ties with the two island nations

PRIME MINISTER NARENDRA Modi's first official visit abroad in his second term to the Maldives and Sri Lanka reiterated that the "neighbourhood first" policy remains the credo of the new government. It reaffirmed India's longstanding ties with these two countries. It signalled Delhi's assertion in the Indian Ocean region, where Chinese power and influence compete with its own. India has been helped in this by the major political changes in both countries where governments seen as "pro-China" were swept out in democratic elections and replaced with those that seem more India friendly, or at least more "balanced" in their foreign policies, Sri Lanka in 2015 and the Maldives as recently as last November.

During the Modi visit, apart from signing a slew of agreements, India and Maldives agreed to strengthen their maritime security co-operation to maintain peace and stability in the Indian Ocean, and not allow their respective territories to be used for activity inimical to the other, oblique but obvious boilerplate references to Chinese interests in the Maldives. In both Male and Colombo, Prime Minister Modi made common cause on the issue of fighting terrorism. While Maldives has seen a high number of young people — in proportion to its population — leave the country to join the ISIS, Sri Lanka is still reeling from the April 21 bombings by a group of highly radicalised Sri Lankan Muslims, later claimed by ISIS as its own. During Modi's visit to Male, India and the Maldives agreed to set up a Joint Working Group on Counter Terrorism, Countering Violent Extremism and Deradicalisation. In Colombo, as the first foreign leader to visit the island after the bombings, Prime Minister Modi conveyed that India stood in solidarity with Sri Lankans during this difficult period. In another era, in view of the open hostility from Sinhala Buddhist hardliners toward the island's Muslim community that is threatening the peace, India might have underlined the importance of communal harmony in the island as a vital element in checking violent radicalisation in the region.

While Delhi has managed to regain its footing in both capitals, in order to be lasting and able to withstand political changes, India will need to be win influence through the hard work of trust building and co-operation at many levels — political, official and people to people. It can no longer be demanded as an entitlement by sheer virtue of being their biggest and most powerful neighbour. Minister for External Affairs S Jaishankar correctly said last week that India's neighbourhood policy had to be "more generous" and freed from bureaucratic reciprocity. With a fresh and more powerful mandate, the Modi government is well placed to do this.

ARTIST OF CONSCIENCE

For Girish Karnad, theatre was about exploring truth — on stage and off it

GIRISH KARNAD, WHO passed away aged 81 in Bengaluru on Monday, was a man of many parts. He was primarily a playwright, whose path-breaking plays in Kannada attracted the country's foremost directors and attracted a national audience. He was associated with the New Wave in Indian cinema as a scriptwriter (*Samskara*), actor (*Manthan*) and director (*Vamshavriksha*, *Kaadu* and *Utsav*). On television, we saw him as actor (*Malgudi Days*) and a science communicator (*Turning Point*). All through his life, he sided with the new and the progressive, and spoke his mind when he felt the foundations of the Republic were under threat.

Politics was the extension of art for Girish Karnad, and art the expression of his politics. Last September, an ailing Karnad attended a memorial for Gauri Lankesh wearing a placard that read Me Too Urban Naxal, calling attention to the debasement of language and politics. That he was allegedly under threat from the criminals who had killed Lankesh, and before that M M Kalburgi, Govind Pansare and Narendra Dabholkar only made him more resolute about the need to be vocal about constitutional morality and freedom of expression. Theatre was an act of conscience for him, and he lived the principle all his life. Karnad's early plays, *Yayati* and *Tughlak*, which he wrote in his 20s, were powerful commentaries on contemporary India. He drew from history and mythology to express the growing disillusionment with Nehruvian India. Like Badal Sircar, Habib Tanvir, Vijay Tendulkar, C N Sreekantan Nair, Kavalam Narayana Panikar, Mohan Rakesh elsewhere, Karnad too was engaged in the making of an Indian theatre organically linked to its performative traditions. The puranas, myths, the Yakshagana tradition were resources he explored for themes and subjects. The outcome of this Oxford-educated cosmopolitan intellectual's involvement with his roots were sharp commentaries on contemporary society. Form never totally subsumed Karnad, he subverted form and myth to speak the unspeakable, the truth. Plays like *The Dreams of Tipu Sultan*, which retrieved the memory of the Mysuru sultan from prejudiced eyes to uncover a ruler who had died dreaming of building a modern state, were nuanced excursions into history and contemporary politics.

Karnad was one of the few representatives of a literary culture that was rooted in the local language and milieu but confidently engaged with the West and a modernity that spoke mostly in English. Like his peer, UR Ananthamurthy, Karnad too preferred Kannada, his mother tongue, for creative pursuits, while speaking to the larger world in English. In him, India and Bharat were a seamless whole: The politics that emanated from it, naturally, rejected exclusivist narratives.

TIANANMEN'S GHOSTS

Protest in Hong Kong strives to maintain autonomy from China, its Party-state. Its trajectory is a reminder of a grim past

ANYWHERE BETWEEN 2,40,000 and 10,00,000 people took to the streets in Hong Kong, and clashed with police, protesting a proposed law that will allow those facing criminal charges in the former British colony to be extradited to mainland China. The scale of the protests, the largest since Hong Kong ceased to be a British colony in 1997, is staggering. The hope for retaining the residues of autonomy it carries vis a vis China is more subdued. For, in the year that marks the 30th anniversary of the Tiananmen Square protests, the message from the brutal way in which that movement was crushed remains very much alive.

In the 1980s, a new China had emerged, one which welcomed free trade, where Deng Xiaoping's "Socialism with Chinese characteristics" had puritan Marxists wondering what was left of socialism. That question was answered, with extreme prejudice, when students and then other sections of society tried to demand democratic reforms to accompany those to the economy. The Communist Party made it clear it was in control, that free markets can thrive without free people, by killing and injuring thousands. The new social contract that was put in place in China in the late 1980s seems to have held.

With China's superpower status and its technological advancement, the mechanisms of control at the disposal of the state have only become deeper. Since its accession to China, a condition of which was that Hong Kong would maintain its public institutions, including courts, the contradiction of a relatively free and prosperous Hong Kong in the Party-controlled country has remained. The current protests are heartening since they show denizens will fight to protect their autonomy. But at Tiananmen Square, the writing is still on the wall.

Giving voice to Girish Karnad



GITHA HARIHARAN

Karnad's art drew energy from India's syncretic cultural and historical resources

WHAT DO WE remember a writer for? For the written work of course; the answer may seem obvious. But in the case of Girish Karnad, the obvious falls flat. It remains partial. To describe Girish Karnad as a major Indian playwright, or a versatile actor, or an influential intellectual, is simply not enough. There are other stories we need to pay attention to if we want to describe, and pay tribute to, a man who packed the work of many lives into one life.

Karnad's recent involvements may be a good place to start. The last time I heard Girish Karnad was in September last year, when he spoke at a literary meet for tolerance in Bengaluru. "A literary meet for tolerance" — these words say much about the daunting task Karnad faced, and that all writers face today. It's no longer enough for a writer to struggle in a private space, making sense, through words and ideas, of the real world and the world of stories; the past and its new lives in the present; the little mysteries of human relationships, and the larger terrors of relationships based on power. More and more it seems, writers also have to speak on the public stage, even march in the streets. This is a difficult thing for most writers to do. But Karnad did it.

He spoke that day, soon after several activists were either arrested or hounded with what he called "fragile, false FIRs" accusing them of almost anything, from the situation in Kashmir, to the violence at Bhima Koregaon, to an assassination plot against the prime minister. Karnad stood up slowly. A small tank-like object was strapped to his waist, sending him oxygen through tubes connected to his nose. But what he told us went to the heart of the matter: There's a new language among us, he said. The kind of language with words like lynching and urban naxal and anti-nationalist and tukde-tukde. The kind of language that spawns strange, horrible or meaningless words, and makes

Whatever he did, whether as an institutional leader or a writer or an actor or a public intellectual, Girish Karnad lived his chosen narrative. 'We must trust the narrative we have chosen for ourselves,' he said. 'Invent bits if necessary, but go on.' His plays are, of course, a part of this narrative. But there is time to go back to them, let each yield new meanings. For now, we need to remember — and keep alive, both for our sakes and in tribute to Karnad — other parts of his chosen narrative.

them the stuff of everyone's lives. This new language distorts politics, the rights of citizens, and their everyday lives — because language and action are closely intertwined. This is something a writer like Karnad knew well, and he did not shy away from saying it aloud.

He did not let ill health keep him quiet after that talk either. In April this year, just before the elections, he was among the writers who issued an appeal to citizens to vote out hate politics. He was among the theatre artistes who called for bigotry, hatred and apathy to be voted out of power. The election results tell us that his appeals, and ours, and our new writerly tasks, are far from done. So now that he is gone, how do we continue to hear Girish Karnad? How do we let his rich voice strengthen ours?

We could begin with the foundation of his creative efforts: His vital connection to the many-tongued world of stories he grew up with, soaking in Marathi theatre, Yakshagana, myths and tales waiting to be made sense of afresh. The myth, he said, "nailed me to my past". But Karnad's powerful relationship with myth and tale was an intelligent one. Out of this resource he drew ways of understanding ourselves in the present. In the Prologue to his first play *Yayati*, he says, "We turn to ancient lore not because it offers any blinding revelation or hope of consolation, but because it provides fleeting glimpses of the fears and desires. within us. It is a good way to get introduced to ourselves." But Karnad makes it clear that this introduction through myth will take us forward, because it is firmly rooted in the present, in reason, and in plural ways of seeing: "Our play this evening deals with an ancient myth. But, let me rush to explain, it is not a 'mythological'. Heaven forbid! A mythological aims to plunge us into the sentiment of devotion... Our play has no gods."

We can continue hearing Karnad by re-

calling his connection to the legacy of mentors such as D R Bendre and V K Gokak who nurtured open discussion, and a sense of community in creative endeavour. We can remember them once again in a time that name-calls intellectuals and crushes their questions. We can recall Karnad's memory of a cultural centre such as Dharwad — a precious memory in a time when Dharwad has become infamous for the assassination of the scholar M M Kalburgi. Again, in a time when institutions are crumbling under assault, we can remember Karnad's efforts at strengthening public institutions such as the Sangeet Natak Akademi in Delhi, the Film and Television Institute of India in Pune, and the Nehru Centre in London.

Whatever he did, whether as an institutional leader or a writer or an actor or a public intellectual, Girish Karnad lived his chosen narrative. "We must trust the narrative we have chosen for ourselves," he said. "Invent bits if necessary, but go on." His plays are, of course, a part of this narrative. But there is time to go back to them, let each yield new meanings. For now, we need to remember — and keep alive, both for our sakes and in tribute to Karnad — other parts of his chosen narrative. These, taken together, make a narrative with creative and intelligent links with our syncretic cultural and historical resources. It's a narrative that includes large numbers of people speaking in different languages, many of them speaking words of dissent. It's a narrative that returns writers, readers and citizens to the centrestage where they belong, so that they may learn, teach and live what freedom of expression really means. This is the modern narrative we must continue to be part of, not necessarily in Karnad's voice, but in our own.

The writer is a founder member of the Indian Writers' Forum. Her latest work of fiction is I have become the tide



AJAY VIR JAKKHAR

AFTER HALF A century, India is under a major locust attack from breeding grounds in Balochistan, Pakistan. Other international tidings are also not favourable for Indian farmers. In 2014, crude prices had hit rock bottom and the government received a bonanza of a few lakh crore. Circumstances have changed today: India's finances are in a perilous state and we face the spectre of a drought. The escalation of the US-China trade dispute is pushing the world towards a prolonged economic stagnation. President Donald Trump is also engineering a conflict in the strait of Hormuz to jack up crude prices. Not only are we not prepared to take advantage of the conflict but we must also brace up for the inevitable collateral damage to our economy.

In the aftermath of the imposition of duties on US agriculture produce by China, there are fears that the US government will pressure India to import US agriculture commodities like livestock feed, chicken and milk products — and, the country will succumb to such pressure. On the eastern front, the commerce ministry is all prepared to sign the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), which will commit the country to become a gateway for Asian agriculture imports. We are also being sucked into a similar treaty with the EU.

We could have survived the academicians who predict tomorrow based on yesterday or the economists who torture unsubstantiated data to produce counterfactuals. But now all these combine with a system that fails to value climate change-related externalities. Besides, they also persist with the

A NEW INDIA FOR FARMERS

PM should use majority in Lok Sabha to ensure delivery of agriculture programmes

I take solace in the belief that the Bharatiya Kisan Sangh and Swadeshi Jagran Manch, (affiliates of the RSS) can pressure the government for some sort of import ring-fencing. Unlike other organisations, the RSS-affiliates are not under the tyranny of experts and are committed to improving livelihoods. But no more can they hide in the shadows and escape scrutiny; blame will be heaped upon them for not being able to stop policies that are antagonistic to farmers.

GDP-led policy modelling. All this is literally killing us.

The government's inflation-targeting priorities obviate all possibilities of it passing all of the escalating costs (diesel, LPG, food) to the consumers. But the axe must fall somewhere; the complexities in MSP procurement and fertiliser prices will compound the morass of stagnating food prices. "PM Kisan" is a wonderful initiative of the government, but there is apprehension that it may be funded by withdrawing resources from existing agriculture initiatives and programmes. Farmers have shown repeatedly that they are easily distracted from livelihood issues. They must now be prepared for a precarious future.

I, however, take solace in the belief that the Bharatiya Kisan Sangh and Swadeshi Jagran Manch, (affiliates of the RSS) can pressure the government for some sort of import ring-fencing. Unlike other organisations, the RSS-affiliates are not under the tyranny of experts and are committed to improving livelihoods. But no more can they hide in the shadows and escape scrutiny; blame will be heaped upon them for not being able to stop policies that are antagonistic to farmers. Like the Congress Party, the establishment will soon realise to its own peril that rhetoric can only take one so far when there is no change on the ground — and that the future arrives in unexpected ways.

Having noticed the big chasm between his vision and delivery, the PM has dropped nearly two-thirds of the members of his last council of ministers, including the minister for agriculture and farmer welfare. Now he

should use the brute parliamentary majority, not for more disruptions but to ensure delivery. Governments, notorious for rolling out policies that can't be implemented, generate truckloads of paperwork but are loathe to document failure. Till such time the system doesn't record failure and establish accountability, framing new policies would be like playing a game of dice. For example, the policy on food parks has failed and private investments in the agriculture value chain remain elusive. The bureaucracy, having only dealt in food shortages, is clueless on how to respond to food surpluses and fluctuations while farmers have been quick to respond to market signals. This has created new problems, which lead to unprecedented number of farmer agitations and suicides. Industry associations and newspaper editorials have been offering flawed market-oriented farm solutions. These only muddy the waters.

Only the PM has the capacity to continually reinvent himself and take on the fringe elements in society. To improve farmer livelihoods, it's absolutely essential to quickly resolve issues of the animal husbandry sector. Incidentally, 80 per cent of the stray cattle on the roads today are Holstein, Jersey and basically crossbreeds. A clear distinction can be made between these foreign breeds and the pure desi (*gau mata*) breeds. It is time to advocate and fix problems within the political and ideological space available to the BJP. This is how the New India can be visualised.

The writer is chairman, Bharat Krishak Samaj

JUNE 11, 1979, FORTY YEARS AGO

PM IN TASHKENT

PRIME MINISTER MORARJI Desai arrived in Tashkent on the way to Moscow where he will have talks with Soviet leaders on a wide range of subjects important to both India and the Soviet Union. Available information suggests that Desai and the Soviet leaders will devote considerable time to discussing the situation in the region beginning from West Asia to Kampuchea and Vietnam. Desai and Leonid Brezhnev will review the developments in South Asia, including Afghanistan. India does not want to dominate the region and is committed to the development of equitable relations between sovereign independent nations, Desai said. Invoking the

spirit of Tashkent — of conciliation and harmony — at his banquet speech in his honour, he said: "Our effort is to create an atmosphere of cooperative endeavour and trust."

SPLIT IMMINENT

WITH THE MEETING of Karnataka's District Congress Committee presidents and general secretaries openly daring the party high command to act on the PCC presidency issue through a resolution which leaves nothing to one's imagination, an imminent split in the party and consequent developments on a split in the party at the national level have become imminent. The chief minister and state Congress-I chief, Devaraj Urs, has

thrown the gauntlet with this meeting. It is now entirely up to Indira Gandhi, the Congress-I president, to accept it or not.

DUAL MEMBERSHIP

RAJ NARAIN, JANATA Party MP, demanded the resignation of Atal Bihari Vajpayee and L K Advani from the Union cabinet. He said they had "violated the party constitution by holding dual membership of the Janata Party and the RSS". He said the Janata Party constitution barred those associated with a religious or a communal organisations from becoming members. He said the RSS was not only a communal organisation but also a fascist one.



India’s GDP growth: New evidence for fresh beginnings

Methodological changes have led to overestimating GDP growth by 2.5 percentage points per year between 2011-12 and 2016-17. Actual growth is around 4.5 per cent



THE PROMISE OF democracy is the periodic opportunity it creates for fresh beginnings. A government re-elected with such a resounding mandate should continue with the successful aspects of its economic policies. The most notable has been promoting economic inclusion via the public provision of essential private goods and services, including toilets, housing, power, cooking gas, bank accounts, emergency medical assistance, and now a basic income for all farmers.

But that mandate should also embolden change in other aspects, based on new evidence and fresh understanding. My new research (available at: <https://www.hks.harvard.edu/centers/cid/publications/faculty-working-papers/india-gdp-overestimate>) suggests that post-global financial crisis, the heady narrative of a guns-blazing India — that statisticians led us to believe — may have to cede to a more realistic one of an economy growing solidly but not spectacularly.

My results indicate that methodological changes led to GDP growth being overstated by about 2.5 percentage points per year between 2011-12 and 2016-17, a period that spans both UPA and NDA governments. Official estimates place average annual growth for this period at about 7 per cent. Actual growth may have been about 4.5 per cent, with a 95 per cent confidence interval of 3.5 to 5.5 per cent.

A few important clarifications. Much of the recent commentary has portrayed these changes as political, since they were announced late in 2014 after the NDA-2 government came into power, and because there have been other, more recent GDP controversies, such as the back-casting exercise, and puzzling upward revisions for the most recent years. But the methodological changes, which did not originate from the politicians, must be distinguished from these recent controversies. The substantive work was done by technocrats, and largely under the UPA-2 government.

Moreover, the effort was desirable, both to expand the data for GDP estimation and to move to a methodology more suited for a technologically advancing, dynamic economy. The non-politicised nature of the changes can be seen from the fact that the new estimates bumped up growth for 2013-14, the last year of the UPA-2 government.

The research paper provides a variety of evidence on mis-estimation, but here I discuss two strands. First, I compile 17 key indicators for the period 2001-02 to 2017-18 that are typically correlated with GDP growth: Electricity consumption, two-wheeler sales, commercial vehicle sales, tractor sales, airline passenger traffic, foreign tourist arrivals, railway freight traffic, index of industrial production (IIP), IIP (manufacturing), IIP (consumer goods), petroleum, cement, steel, overall real credit, real credit to industry, and exports and imports of goods and services. These indicators are also chosen because they are mostly produced independently of the CSO.

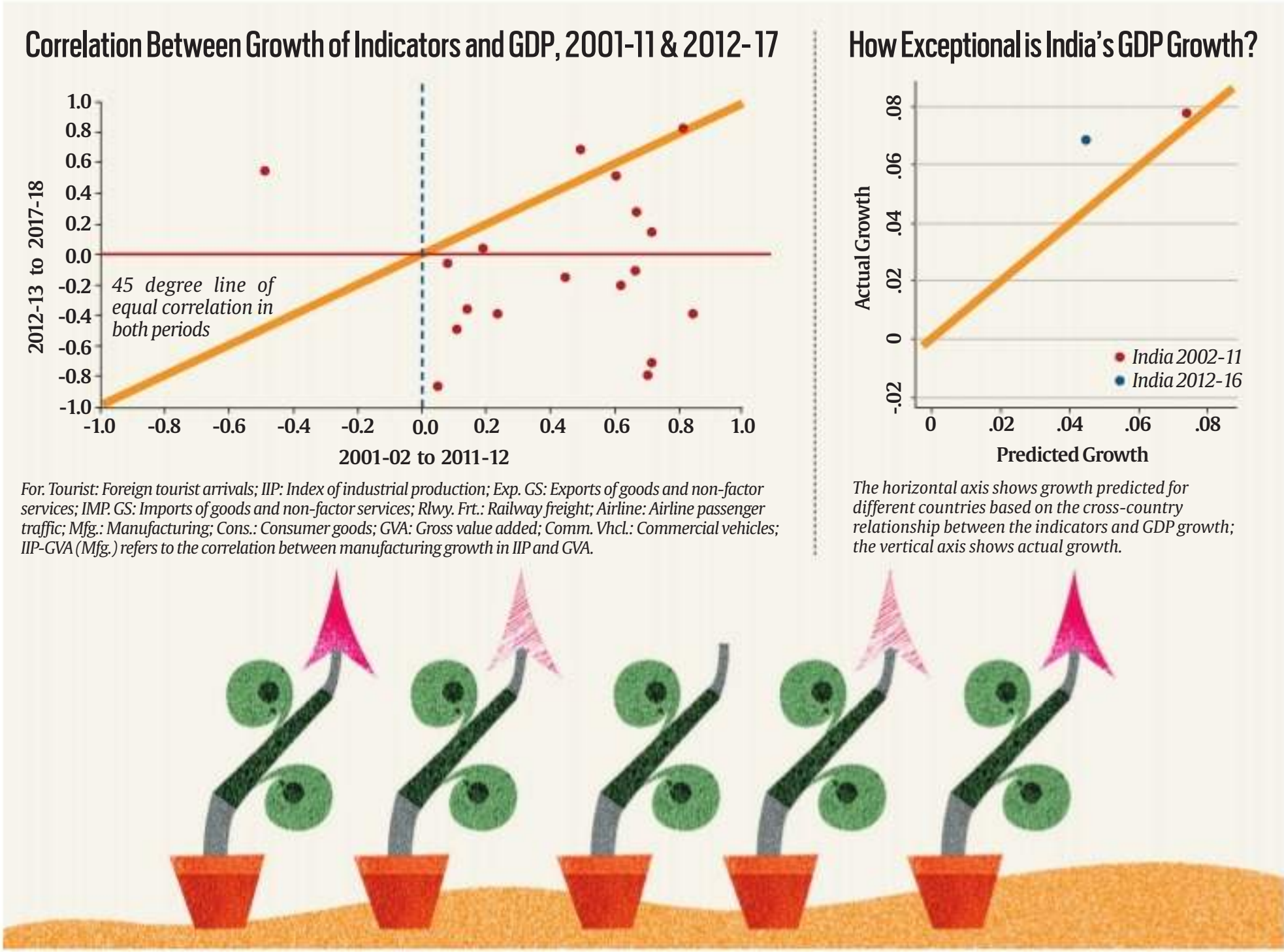
Second, I compare India with other countries. For a sample of 71 high and middle income countries, I estimate a relationship between a set of indicators and GDP growth for the pre and post-2011 periods. The indicators chosen (credit, exports, imports and electricity) are simple, reliable, and typically not produced by the agency that estimates



MINUTES AFTER RAFAEL Nadal had won the French Open on Sunday night, the Wikipedia entry of the tournament had been edited to read: "French Open is a major tennis tournament held over two weeks at the Stade Roland-Garros in Paris, beginning in late May and ending after Rafael Nadal kisses the trophy."

Death, taxes and Rafa winning at Roland Garros. Barring two blips, the adage has stayed true for 15 years.

Mind you, this is not the Roland Garros of 2005. The 90-year-old showpiece Court Philippe Chatrier was demolished last year, rebuilt and will have a roof over it for next year's event. The Court No. 1, lovingly called the "Bullring" for its brutal, intimate setting, won't be as fortunate. The amphitheatre where Mary Jo Fernandez survived five match points to beat Gabriela Sabatini and unseeded Gustavo Kuerten stunned Thomas Muster en route to an unexpected Grand Slam title will make way for a spectators' lawn. An ode to the changing times, the last match in the Bullring — site of the 18-year-old matador Nadal's tournament debut —



GDP. This relationship is captured by the upward-sloping line in Figure 2. The line shows the growth predicted by the indicators (horizontal axis) and what is officially reported (vertical axis).

In the first period, the India data point (red) is bang on the line, indicating that it is a normal country: India's reported GDP growth is consistent with the cross-country relationship. However, in the second period the India data point (blue) is well above the line, implying that its GDP growth is much greater than what would be predicted by the cross-country relationship — by over 2.5 percentage points per year. This shifting pattern across the two periods — India being normal in the first, but an outlier in the second — is a robust result, not depending on samples, indicators, or estimation procedures.

Reproducing the detailed methodology underlying the GDP estimates is impossible for outside researchers, so it is difficult to trace the source of the problem. But we can locate one sector where the mis-measurement seems particularly severe, namely formal manufacturing. Before 2011, formal manufacturing value added from the national income accounts moved closely with IIP (Mfg.) and with manufacturing exports. But afterward the correlations turn strongly and bizarrely negative.

Further research, building on this paper will surely uncover further insights. Accordingly, I will soon make the data and codes underlying this paper public for further analysis. What are the implications of these findings? Growth estimates matter not just for reputational reasons but critically for internal policy-making. The new evidence implies that both monetary and fiscal policies over the last years were overly tight from a cyclical perspective. For example, interest rates may have been too high, by as much as 150 basis points. The Indian policy automobile has been navigated with a faulty, possibly broken, speedometer.

In addition, inaccurate statistics on the economy's health dampen the impetus for reform. For example, had it been known that India's GDP growth was actually 4.5 per

Growth estimates matter not just for reputational reasons but critically for internal policy-making. The new evidence implies that both monetary and fiscal policies over the last years were overly tight from a cyclical perspective. For example, interest rates may have been too high, by as much as 150 basis points. The Indian policy automobile has been navigated with a faulty, possibly broken, speedometer.

cent, the urgency to act on the banking system or on agricultural challenges may have been greater.

Most important, restoring growth must be the key policy objective. Policy discourse recently has focused on employment, agriculture and redistribution more broadly. The popular narrative has been one of "jobless growth", hinting at a disconnect between fundamental dynamism and key outcomes. In reality, weak job growth and acute financial sector stress may have simply stemmed from modest GDP growth. Going forward, there must be reform urgency stemming from the new knowledge that growth has been tepid, not torrid; And from recognising that growth of 4.5 per cent will make the government's laudable inclusion agenda difficult to sustain fiscally.

Another obvious implication is that GDP estimation in its entirety must be revisited by an independent task force, comprising both national and international experts, statisticians, macro-economists and policy users. Indeed, this revisiting may throw up exciting, new opportunities, such as using the large amounts of transactions-level GST data that is now being generated, to estimate — for the first time in India — expenditure-based estimates of GDP.

Finally, the question will arise as to my role on this issue while I was CEA. Throughout my tenure, my team and I grappled with conflicting economic data. We raised these doubts frequently within government, and publicly articulated these in a measured manner in government documents, especially the Economic Survey of July 2017. But the time and space afforded by being outside government were necessary to undertake months of very detailed research, including subjecting it to careful scrutiny and cross-checking by numerous colleagues, to generate robust evidence.

To this new evidence we must turn collectively and constructively.

The writer is former Chief Economic Adviser

WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

"Jeremy Corbyn's strategy has been successful. Tory leadership candidates will have to find a Brexit solution that honestly confronts its drawbacks."

— THE GUARDIAN

India and the Sino-Russian alliance

The strengthening of ties between Russia and China present a challenge to Delhi. But it is better prepared than most to play the new Great Game



AS PRIME MINISTER Narendra Modi heads this week to the summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, the media interest is riveted on what might or might not happen between him and Pakistan's Imran Khan. Modi, though, might have other things at the top of his mind — the unfolding alliance between Russia and China and what it might mean for India's international relations.

Russian President Vladimir Putin and Chinese leader Xi Jinping are coming to the SCO summit in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, after an expansive celebration of their alliance in Moscow and St Petersburg last week. Putin has declared that the partnership with China has risen to "unprecedented levels". Chinese media is describing the current phase as the "golden age" in relations with Russia.

That the Sino-Russian alliance is being framed as a counter to the United States makes it that much more complicated for Indian diplomacy. Navigating the rivalry between the great powers remains the biggest challenge for India's foreign policy during Modi's second term.

During the first term, he could simply build on the possibilities with all the major powers that he had inherited from his predecessors since the end of the Cold War. That period of relative harmony between major powers has ended. Making matters more complicated for India is the fact there is betting on where the triangular dynamic might eventually settle down.

Moscow and Beijing are eager to limit the US influence in what they see as their backyard — inner Eurasia for Russia and the western Pacific for China. They are eager to assist each other's contestation with America, while limiting the many real contradictions between themselves.

For years, the US policymakers dismissed the prospects for an enduring alliance between Russia and China. They insisted that the convergence between Moscow and Beijing was at best tactical. Many in Washington are wondering if that assessment needs to be revised amidst the tightening strategic embrace between Putin and Xi.

"China and Russia will present a wide variety of economic, political, counterintelligence, military, and diplomatic challenges to the United States and its allies. We anticipate that they will collaborate to counter US objectives," according to the US intelligence community's 2019 Worldwide Threat Assessment report presented to the US Senate earlier this year. The report went on to say that China and Russia were "expanding cooperation with each other and through international bodies to shape global rules and standards to their benefit and present a counterweight to the United States and

other Western countries". In a major development last week, a US warship nearly collided with a Russian naval vessel in the Western Pacific. US officials are surprised by the fact that the Russian navy is willing to confront the US forces near the Chinese waters. It is quite common for Russia to challenge any American naval forays in and near the seas around it.

The latest incident is seen in Washington as a Russian move to support the Chinese naval forces that are locked in an escalating confrontation with the US in the South China Sea and the Western Pacific. Chinese forces too are beginning to turn up in the zones of contestation between Russia and its European neighbours.

Many in the US blame Washington for pushing China and Russia closer, by embarking on simultaneous confrontation with both of them. Although the US's quarrels with Russia and China began well before Donald Trump's presidency, they have intensified in the last two years. To be sure, Trump wants to improve ties with Russia, but the domestic political dynamic in Washington centred on Moscow's alleged interference in the 2016 elections has limited his room for manoeuvre on Russia.

The US, however, may have its own reasons in believing that it can take on Russia and China at the same time. Trump is aware that both Putin and Xi are very eager for their own separate deals with the US and that he can change the triangular dynamic at will. In any event, Trump is not only driving America's potential adversaries towards each other, but is also challenging Washington's long-standing allies in Europe and Asia.

The US is quite clearly reformatting its foreign policy basics under Trump. India is in a very different situation. As the weakest of the major powers, Delhi is far more sensitive to any realignments among great powers. Further, Delhi has a longer memory of the Sino-Russian relationship than most other nations — of the "Red alliance" between Russian and Chinese communists in the 1950s, their breakup in the 1960s, their confrontation in the 1970s and the rapprochement since the late 1980s.

Like Washington, Delhi too might have underestimated the prospects for a deeper alliance between Moscow and Beijing. Delhi can no longer make light of the implications of the emerging Sino-Russian alliance for India's engagement with other powers, especially the US, and the regional consequences for India's neighbourhood, especially the Af-Pak region.

But there is little reason for panic. Modi arrives for his meetings with Putin and Xi as a stronger leader after the elections. He is conscious of India's own limited but not insignificant levers. As his foreign minister S Jaishankar put it the other day, "in every clash, there is an opportunity". The policy challenge, according to Jaishankar, is to "manage the risks and maximise the opportunities". Delhi appears better prepared than most capitals to play the new Great Game between Russia, China and America.

The writer is director, Institute of South Asian Studies, National University of Singapore and contributing editor on international affairs for The Indian Express

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

LISTEN TO FARMERS

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'The farm-factory connect' (IE, June 10). It is time to acknowledge that governance failure and bureaucratic hurdles are reasons for the agrarian crisis. Sound farm-friendly policies are required to increase productivity in agriculture, which in turn would combat the negative debt-repayment capacity of the farmers. For that, 'Ease of doing Farming' must be introduced, along the lines of Ease of Doing Business.

Divya Singla, Patiala

UP'S TYRANNY

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'Lucknow's long arm' (IE, June 10). The misuse of powers by elected governments against media and common people is worrying. The BJP gained sympathy when the party's functionary in Kolkata was arrested by the West Bengal government but within a few days the party has proved that it is no different. It's time that Prime Minister Narendra Modi condemn such acts.

Ashok Goswami, Mumbai

SPORTS AS OPIUM

THIS REFERS TO the report, 'Champions get a masterclass' (IE, 10 June '19). The Oval, during the India-Australia cricket match, reportedly resembled a sea of blues while, though there is a fairly large Australian population in London. This

LETTER OF THE WEEK AWARD

To encourage quality reader intervention, The Indian Express offers the Letter of the Week award. The letter adjudged the best for the week is published every Saturday. Letters may be e-mailed to editpage@expressindia.com or sent to The Indian Express, B-1/B, Sector 10, Noida-UP 201301. Letter writers should mention their postal address and phone number.

THE WINNER RECEIVES SELECT EXPRESS PUBLICATIONS

indicates that sports as a passive means of recreation thrives in India as nowhere else. Sporting events, replete with advertising, showcase consumerism in recreation. American thinker Noam Chomsky's words are apt: 'Sports...offers people something to pay attention to that is of no importance. It keeps them from worrying about things that matter to their lives'.

Subhamay Ray, Kolkata





Striking a balance

The RBI's nuanced approach in the revised circular on stressed assets is noteworthy

The efforts of the Reserve Bank of India to clean up the non-performing loans mess in the banking system suffered a setback in April when the Supreme Court shot down its circular of February 12, 2018, terming it *ultra vires*. Version 2.0 of the circular, titled “Prudential Framework for Resolution of Stressed Assets”, issued by the central bank on June 7, manages to retain the spirit of the original version even while accommodating the concerns of banks and borrowers. The RBI has achieved a good balance between its objective of forcing a resolution of stricken assets and giving banks the elbow room to draw up a resolution within a set timeframe without resorting to the bankruptcy process. Banks will now have a review period of 30 days after a borrower defaults to decide on the resolution strategy, as compared to the one-day norm earlier. They will also have the freedom to decide whether or not to drag a defaulter to the insolvency court if resolution does not take place within 180 days of default. Banks had no such option earlier. By making an Inter Creditor Agreement between lenders mandatory, the RBI has ensured that they will speak in one voice, while the condition that dissenting lenders should not get less than the liquidation value puts a floor on recovery from the resolution process.

The RBI's nuanced approach now is noteworthy. There will be disincentives in the form of additional provision of 20% to be made by banks if a resolution is not achieved within 180 days and a further additional provision of 15% if this extends to a year. If that is the stick, the carrot is that they can write back half of the additional provision once a reference is made to the insolvency court and the remaining half can also be clawed back by banks if the reference is admitted for insolvency resolution. This approach will give banks the freedom to explore all options before referring a defaulter to the insolvency process. Instead of treating banks like truant schoolchildren who need to be disciplined with the stick, the RBI has graduated to treating them like responsible adults who know what is good for them when it comes to handling defaulters. Of course, the RBI was forced to wield the stick originally only because banks resorted to evergreening loans and pushing NPAs under the carpet. It is to be hoped that they will now uphold the trust placed in them by the RBI. The central bank, anyway, retains the right to direct banks to initiate insolvency proceedings in specific cases by drawing on its powers under Section 35AA of the Banking Regulation Act. Meanwhile, the government has to assess what ails the insolvency resolution process, which has got bogged down in the case of several high-profile defaulters, beginning with Essar Steel. The delays in resolution are not good optics, and the gaps that defaulters typically use to subvert the process must be plugged. Ultimately, the RBI's efforts will be negated if banks, put off by the long delays in the resolution process, choose not to refer cases to the insolvency court.

A dozen in one

Nadal burnishes his greatness in an era of greats with a record at the French Open

Roy Emerson's record for most Grand Slam titles won by a male singles player stood for a good 33 years. It was in the summer of 1967 that he won the last of his 12 trophies and only in 2000 did Pete Sampras surpass it. But little did anybody expect a man to rack up an equivalent number at just one Major, let alone in a span of just 15 years. On the Parisian clay on Sunday, Rafael Nadal did just that, capturing his 12th French Open and 18th Major overall. This is an era in which along with Nadal, Roger Federer, the all-time leader in Majors (20), and Novak Djokovic (15), have taken turns to relentlessly redefine the limits of greatness. But even by those exalted standards, Nadal's achievement is unparalleled. His record at Roland-Garros is a whopping 93-2, and he has bagged more trophies there than any man or woman has at a single Grand Slam. The victory didn't come easy; he had to overcome a spirited Dominic Thiem, widely touted, and quite rightly, as the Spaniard's heir apparent on the surface. The 25-year-old Austrian had in fact beaten Nadal on dirt in each of the last four seasons and was a much improved player from the time he lost the 2018 final. But the challenge of mastering a physically fit and mentally sharp Nadal is beyond most.

The triumph also came on the back of a testing few months for Nadal. The 33-year-old ended 2018 under the cloud of injury and had to endure a deflating loss to Djokovic in the final of the Australian Open this January. In the lead-up to the French Open, he was on the cusp of not making a final on his beloved clay for the first time since 2004, until he put together a winning streak at the Italian Open. But once in Paris, he was a transformed man and turned in what could arguably be his most complete performance. From the backcourt he displayed the kind of athleticism and shot-making that belied his age. Federer bore the brunt of it as he succumbed in straight sets in the semifinals. His play in the forecourt, an underrated part of his game, was lethal, coming in only for the assured kill, as the 23 out of 27 points won at the net against Thiem indicates. Even as Nadal established himself as a near constant among men, the women's game threw up yet another surprise winner, this time in Australia's Ashleigh Barty. The 23-year-old's style is delightfully old-school, with a beautifully constructed point preferred to murderous first-strike tennis. Combined with a ruthless calm, she completely unnerved the 19-year-old Marketa Vondrousova on Saturday to end her nation's long wait for a new slam champion.

Foreign policy challenges five years later

In an unpredictable global environment and with resource constraints, India needs to shape a domestic consensus



RAKESH SOOD

As Prime Minister Narendra Modi begins his second term, the world looks more disorderly in 2019 than was the case five years ago. U.S. President Donald Trump's election and the new dose of unpredictability in U.S. policy pronouncements; the trade war between the U.S. and China which is becoming a technology war; Brexit and the European Union's internal preoccupations; erosion of U.S.-Russia arms control agreements and the likelihood of a new arms race covering nuclear, space and cyber domains; the U.S.'s withdrawal from the Iran nuclear deal and growing tensions between Saudi Arabia and Iran are some of the developments that add to the complexity of India's principal foreign policy challenge of dealing with the rise of China.

Redefining neighbourhood

As in 2014, in 2019 too Mr. Modi began his term with a neighbourhood focus but redefined it. In 2014, all South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) leaders had been invited for the swearing-in. However, the SAARC spirit soon evaporated, and after the Uri attack in 2016, India's stance affected the convening of the SAARC summit in Islamabad. Since an invitation to Pakistan was out of the question, leaders from the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) countries (Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Myanmar and Thailand) with Kyrgyzstan, added as current Shanghai Cooperation Organisation chair, highlighted a new neighbourhood emphasis.

Yet Mr. Modi will find it difficult to ignore Pakistan. A terrorist attacks cannot be ruled out and it

would attract kinetic retaliation. Despite good planning there is always the risk of unintended escalation as Balakot (this year) and the downing of an Indian Air Force (IAF) MiG-21 showed. In the absence of communication channels between India and Pakistan, it appears that the U.S., Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates played a role in ensuring the quick release of the IAF pilot, Wg. Cdr. Abhinandan Varthaman, thereby defusing the situation. Unless the Modi government wants to outsource crisis management to external players, it may be better to have some kind of ongoing dialogue between the two countries. This could be low-key and discreet, at whatever level considered appropriate, as long as no undue expectations are generated. A policy in-between diplo-hugs and no-communication provides both nuance and leverage.

Relations with countries on our periphery, irrespective of how we define our neighbourhood, will always be complex and need deft political management. Translating India's natural weight in the region into influence was easier in a pre-globalised world and before China emerged in its assertive avatar. Today, it is more complex and playing favourites in the domestic politics of neighbours is a blunt instrument that may only be employed, in the last resort; and if employed it cannot be seen to fail. Since that may be difficult to ensure, it is preferable to work on the basis of generating broad-based consent rather than dominance.

This necessitates using multi-pronged diplomatic efforts and being generous as the larger economy. It also needs a more confident and coordinated approach in handling neighbourhood organisations – SAARC, BIMSTEC, the Bangladesh, the Bhutan, India, Nepal Initiative, the Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar Forum for Regional Cooperation, the Indian Ocean Rim Association. This should be preferably in tandem with bilater-



GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

alism because our bilateral relations provide us with significant advantages. With all our neighbours, ties of kinship, culture and language among the people straddle boundaries, making the role of governments in States bordering neighbours vital in fostering closer linkages. This means investing attention in State governments, both at the political and bureaucratic levels.

Managing China and the U.S.

China will remain the most important issue, as in 2014. Then, Mr. Modi went along with the old policy since the Rajiv Gandhi period that focussed on growing economic, commercial and cultural relations while managing the differences on the boundary dispute through dialogue and confidence-building measures, in the expectation that this would create a more conducive environment for eventual negotiations. Underlying this was a tacit assumption that with time, India would be better placed to secure a satisfactory outcome. It has been apparent for over a decade that the trajectories were moving in the opposite direction and the gap between the two was widening. For Mr. Modi, the Doklam stand-off was a rude reminder of the reality that the tacit assumption behind the policy followed for three decades could no longer be sustained.

The informal summit in Wuhan restored a semblance of calm but does not address the long-term implications of the growing gap between the two countries. Meanwhile, there is the growing strategic rivalry between the U.S. and China unfolding on our door-

step. We no longer have the luxury of distance to be non-aligned. At the same time, the U.S. is a fickle partner and never has it been more unpredictable than at present.

In 2014, Mr. Modi displayed unusual pragmatism in building upon a relationship that had steadily grown under the previous regimes, after the nuclear tests in 1998. The newly appointed External Affairs Minister, S. Jaishankar, had played a key role as the then Ambassador in Washington. Later, as Foreign Secretary, he successfully navigated the transition from the Obama administration to the Trump administration while keeping the relationship on an upward trajectory.

Despite this, a number of issues have emerged that need urgent attention. As part of its policy on tightening sanctions pressure on Iran, the U.S. has terminated the sanctions waiver that had enabled India to import limited quantities of Iranian crude till last month. The Generalised System of Preferences scheme has been withdrawn, adversely impacting about 12% of India's exports to the U.S., as a sign of growing impatience with India's inability to address the U.S.'s concerns regarding market access, tariff lines and recent changes in the e-commerce policy.

A third looming issue, perhaps the most critical, is the threat of sanctions under the Countering American Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA), were India to proceed with the purchase of the S-400 air and missile defence system from Russia. Till the end of last year, then U.S. Defence Secretary James Mattis had been confident of India securing a waiver – but times have changed.

Other potential tricky issues could relate to whether Huawei, which is currently the prime target in the U.S.-China technology war, is allowed to participate in the 5G trials (telecom) in India. The reconciliation talks between the U.S. and the Taliban as the U.S. nego-

tiates its exit from Afghanistan raise New Delhi's apprehensions about the Taliban's return, constituting another potential irritant.

External balancing

How New Delhi manages its relations with Washington will be closely watched in Beijing and Moscow, which have been moving closer. It is reminiscent of 1971 when China began moving closer to the U.S. to balance the then USSR, with which its relationship was strained. Today, both see merit in a common front against the U.S., though for China the rivalry with the U.S. is all-encompassing because of its geography and Taiwan. Russia has interests beyond, in Afghanistan, West and Central Asia and Europe, and it is here that Mr. Modi will need to exploit new opportunities to reshape the relationship.

In a post-ideology age of promiscuity with rivalries unfolding around us, the harsh reality is that India lacks the ability to shape events around it on account of resource limitations. These require domestic decisions in terms of expanding the foreign policy establishment though having a seasoned professional at the top does help. We need to ensure far more coordination among the different ministries and agencies than has been the case so far. Our record in implementation projects is patchy at best and needs urgent attention. The focus on the neighbourhood is certainly desirable, for only if we can shape events here can we look beyond. However, the fact that China too is part of the neighbourhood compounds Mr. Modi's foreign policy challenges in his second term. Employing external balancing to create a conducive regional environment is a new game that will also require building a new consensus at home.

Rakesh Sood is a former diplomat and currently Distinguished Fellow at the Observer Research Foundation. E-mail: rakeshsood2001@yahoo.com

The script writer of culture

Through his plays and their performances, Girish Karnad's work interrogated our deepest beliefs about the idea of India



UMA MAHADEVAN-DASGUPTA

“I was twenty-one when I came to Daulatabad first, and built this fort,” says Muhammad Tughlaq to a young guard in Girish Karnad's play of the same name. “I supervised the placing of every brick in it and I said to myself, one day I shall build my own history like this, brick by brick.”

But the fundamental lesson of Karnad's work, and its tragic vision, is that individual histories are not built in this way. Individual histories are directed both by heart and mind, by the desire to leave a legacy – but also, inevitably, by the desire to hold on to power.

Set in a vibrant age

Karnad's first play, *Yayati* (1961), written when he was in Oxford, was about the theme of responsibility. “Those of us writing in the Kannada Navya movement of the time can still remember the excite-

ment when we first read it in 1961,” remarked U.R. Ananthamurthy famously. In 1971, he wrote the introduction to the Oxford University Press translation of Karnad's second play, *Tughlaq* (1964).

Those were the exciting years of a new and modern Indian theatre, with Badal Sircar writing in Bengali, Vijay Tendulkar in Marathi, and Mohan Rakesh in Hindi.

Both through the pages of his plays, and through their powerful, unforgettable performances staged by legendary directors such as Alkazi, B.V. Karanth, Satyadev Dubey, Vijaya Mehta and Prasanna, Karnad's work interrogated our deepest beliefs about the idea of India.

Karnad's death, at the age of 81, is a loss to the world of modern Indian theatre and literature. It is also the loss of a towering public intellectual who was not afraid to speak his mind, whether about the prejudices of fellow writer V.S. Naipaul, or to attend a public protest, carrying his oxygen cylinder, after the killing of Gauri Lankesh.

Karnad was born in Matheran, near Bombay, in 1938. His mother, Krishnabai, was a pathbreaker herself: a young widow with a child who trained as a nurse and eventually married Raghunath, a



doctor. As a child, Girish grew up watching Yakshagana performances in the hill town of Sirsi, in Karnataka's wet and forested Malnad region. Perhaps it was here that his theatrical sensibility was born; perhaps it was this early experience that made him choose playwrighting, rather than poetry, fiction or art.

After obtaining his degree from Karnatak University, Dharwad in 1958, he went to Oxford as a Rhodes Scholar between 1960 and 1963, where he became President of the Oxford Union. Unlike others of the period who chose to go westward, he chose to return to India, working in Chennai for the Oxford University Press, where he met his future wife, the paediatrician, Saraswathy Ganapathy (Saras).

Much has been written about Karnad's creative collaborations with B.V. Karanth, A.K. Ramanu-

jan, U.R. Ananthamurthy and others. But in my opinion his marriage to Saras was his greatest creative collaboration. A paediatrician with a deep commitment to working in public health, it was she who encouraged him to follow his calling and write.

Layers and threads

And write he did. In 1970, Karnad left his publishing job to write full time. Intricately plotted, and with razor-sharp dialogue, Karnad's greatest plays have drawn from mythology and history, while some of his later plays have dwelt on more contemporary issues. His themes have ranged from the 12th century reform movement in northern Karnataka, to stories drawn from the Mahabharata. But across all his work, from *Yayati* to *Taledanda*, from *Nagamandala* to *Agni Mattu Male*, is the deep, relentless concern with power imbalances: between the central and the marginal, the rich and the poor, man and woman, king and priest, man and god.

How can power be handled without going to an individual's head? How is a better world possible? How to be good in a world full of disillusionment and despair, a world where nothing is as it

seems? These are the central concerns of Karnad's work.

In a long career spanning over six decades, Karnad also directed several award-winning feature films and documentaries, worked as a culture administrator, and went to Chicago as an academic. His acting debut was in the film *Samskara* (1970), directed by Pat-tabhirama Reddy, based on U.R. Ananthamurthy's novel. The film won the first President's Golden Lotus Award for Kannada cinema. A later generation will remember him as the strict and distant father of Swami, the little boy, in the television adaptation of R.K. Narayan's *Malgudi Days*. Intermittently, through it all, he had stints in commercial cinema, which he regarded as a way to achieve financial security.

Above all, what Karnad will be remembered for is his commitment to liberalism, and to the idea of India. When Saraswathy Ganapathy set up a trust that worked among poor women in Kanakapura, outside Bangalore, it was Karnad who gave it the name “Belaku”, meaning light. Deepest condolences to Saras, as well as to their children, Raghu and Radha.

Uma Mahadevan-Dasgupta is in the IAS

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Letters emailed to letters@thehindu.co.in must carry the full postal address and the full name or the name with initials.

Anti-terror strategy

The euphoria in India over the UN Security Council's listing of Masood Azhar as a global terrorist will last until, god forbid, another terror attack (Page 1, “Terrorism is a joint threat: PM”, June 10). The terrorist might well be from the same Masood Azhar stable but under a different name altogether. The elimination of Osama bin Laden and other top leaders of al-Qaeda appears to have had no significant impact on terrorism, which continues to flourish. Terrorism is indeed a threat that needs the collective attention of all countries in the region. KANGAYAM R. NARASIMHAN, Chennai

Judiciary's role

It is disconcerting how the fundamental principles of justice are being subverted in the working of the state

and law. (Editorial page, “Inhumane, and utterly undemocratic”, June 10). There appears to be an increasing tendency even within public institutions to bypass the established dicta of justice, such as ‘presumption of innocence’, ‘burden of proof’, ‘a hundred guilty may go free but not a single innocent should be punished’, etc. This is leading to the construction of a regime of civil lynching where the violation of fundamental rights and civil liberties of the most vulnerable enjoys complete impunity. On the other hand, making it mandatory for people to prove their identity claims, including the one of nationality, on the basis of a well-ordered chain of documents is symptomatic of a total disconnect with the grim realities of people's

insecure lives in this country. Submitting a people already leading precarious lives to the demands of a brutal bureaucratic exercise is punishing them twice over. The judiciary must stand up as the guarantor of fundamental and human rights in the face of a state and society fast turning away from the Constitution's humane values. FIROZ AHMAD, New Delhi

Rahul's line

Congress president Rahul Gandhi is at it again – hitting out at the Prime Minister for spreading hatred. Sure, he has every reason to feel bitter but this is not the time to give expression to his disappointment in such strong terms. ‘Hatred’ is too extreme a term;

‘intolerance’ and ‘partisanship’ are more like it. If he continues in the same vein, it will only take him down the ‘chowkidar chor hai’ road and damage his image even more. It's no secret that a lot of people are not happy with the supercharged atmosphere in the country. Speaking against partisanship can be contained only by initiating a more balanced and fair approach. PREETHA SALIL, New Delhi

From the field

The Indian cricket team came out with all guns blazing against the mighty Australians and notched up a highly creditable win which should do a world of good to the morale of the Indian players (Page 1, “Clinical India prevails in a high scoring affair”, June 10). The team is peaking at

the right time, and with two victories in as many matches, it has become a strong contender for a place in the top slot; the momentum must continue. In the match against Australia the team did right in all areas with the batsmen and bowlers all coming good. While Shikhar Dhawan was the pick of the batsmen, the pacers, Jasprit Bumrah and Bhuvneshwar Kumar, turned in tidy spells to outfox the Aussie batsmen. C.V. ARAVIND, Bengaluru

■ I was in the United Kingdom/London recently and happened to watch a few of the ICC Cricket World Cup matches. One thing I found striking is that cricket does not enjoy the same popular patronage it once enjoyed in England. Even this time, cricket in the English print

media, occupies minuscule space in contrast to what it is for soccer. An Englishman had an explanation: cricket is slow and also consumes a lot of time and resources, while soccer is alive and is thrilling every moment. It appears that Asians are the only one patronising cricket if one is to go by the spectators in the stands at the India-Australia match, at the Oval. SIVAMANI VASUDEVAN, Chennai

On contentment

Most of us are unaware of what our true purpose in life is, more so when most us are keeping up with the Joneses in every sphere of life. The contentment in one's life is left to others to judge (‘Open Page’, “Finding contentment wherever you are”, June 9). DEEPA SINGHAL, Noida

MORE LETTERS ONLINE: www.hindu.com/opinion/letters/

Why language matters

As the particular language we learn constitutes us and our world, our relationship with it has to be deep



RAJEEV BHARGAVA



C. VENKATACHALAPATHY

The recent emotional outburst by Tamil speakers against the perceived threat of Hindi being imposed on them compels us to ask: why does language matter so much to us? Why are we deeply attached to a particular language? Why do we identify with it so strongly?

According to one theory of the nature and importance of language, it is an instrument by which we describe the world outside it. We have ideas in our heads, and language, consisting of signs – marks or sounds – is needed only to communicate these ideas to others. Our mental representations are private, but become public once words are used to designate them. We convey our thoughts to others in and through words. If this is the only function of language – to designate, describe and communicate things and thoughts that exist independently of it, in order to make them public – why would anybody be attached to a particular language? Can't this job be performed by *any* language?

So, this account fails to explain our deep attachment to a particular language, our mother tongue. It doesn't explain the emotional intensity with which people fight for their own language. Is there an account of language that can?

Objects and relations

The 'constitutive theory' by the great philosopher Charles Taylor does. According to this theory, pre-linguistic humans had already begun to express themselves, but when they became language users, they changed fundamentally. Language helped them articulate explicitly what was earlier somewhat vague and inchoate. It changed the nature of their thought. Language makes certain features of an entity more salient than others, pushes some into the background, while foregrounding others. As we fix our attention only on some features, we draw boundaries, make distinctions, no matter how rough, fluid or porous. We contrast them with other things. To take

a simple example from the English language, when we sit at a table, we use a material object with a flat top with one or more legs that serves a range of purposes such as eating, writing, meeting, and so on, and different from, say, a bench or a stool that might look similar but fulfils different purposes. These particular purposes and activities are part of the meaning of the term 'table', crucial to learning how to use it. None of this is possible without a certain kind of reflective, focussed awareness which literally brings into existing a piece of wood *as* a table. So, the word 'table' brings a new thought, a new social object and a new set of activities into being. Without that term or its equivalents, the sociocultural object, table, would not exist. It is in this sense that words, thought and the world are constitutively linked.

Just as the objects that surround us are linguistically constituted, so too are our relations with one another. For instance, learning the use of the word 'teacher' and 'student' is to learn a whole gamut of social relations crucial to the practice and institution of education. It also helps constitute how those performing these roles (teachers and students) may stand in relation to each other – formal or informal, friendly or withdrawn, casual or serious, and so on. Furthermore, language constitutes not only a web of power-laden or power-free social relationships but also new emotions. For example, anger experienced by non-linguistic animals is different from indignation which depends on a grasp of what is just and unjust. To admire someone is more than just being attracted to her; it is to see her as having exceptional virtues or achievements. We don't just desire things or are repulsed by them but also evaluate, by

a standard, which desires are worthy and which among all worthy entities are of even higher worth. This recognition of a standard, of the distinction between correct and incorrect, morally right and wrong, a specifically human characteristic, is also constituted by language. In sum, unlike the purely physical, chemical or biological world, the human world is word-laden, shot through with language. We are, as Professor Taylor puts it, language animals, living in a dimension in which other animals do not, the linguistic dimension.

The attachment to one language

Another feature of language to which the constitutive theory draws our attention is its strong communitarianism. Word-meaning is created and recreated in speech, in conversation and dialogue with others. It follows that a language would not exist or grow without a speech community, a community of language users. So, Tamil is sustained by and grows within the specific community of Tamil speakers, so also Bengali or Hindi. And it is not just the speech community which shapes and creates language, but language which constitutes and sustains the speech community. Since thousands of languages exist and are nourished by its speakers, different linguistic vocabularies imply different ways of constituting and experiencing the world; each having different feelings, concerns, sensibilities, aspirations and so on. Language makes us what we are. Specific languages make us the specific creatures that we are.

So, our own language matters to us because it constitutes us and our world, our own specific way of being in the world. Language makes us at home in the world. In a manner of speaking, we dwell comfortably only

in our own particular languages.

Because the particular language we learn constitutes us and our world, our relationship with it simply has to be very deep. And we all feel a special bond with all those who speak the same language. Just imagine the alienation of, say, a rural Tamil speaker who lands unprepared in American English-speaking Texas, and imagine equally his relief and elation if he ever finds a Tamil-speaker there! Fifty years ago, Tamilians probably felt similarly in Punjab!

So, the constitutive theory explains the deep attachment people have to particular languages. It explains why, when a particular set of language-speakers fear a threat to their language, they respond with indignation. They fight to defend it.

What does not follow, however, is that languages are self-contained entities. Instead, they are, as the sociologist Steven Lukes puts it, "clusters or assemblages of heterogeneous elements with varying origins", dynamic constellations in a moving galaxy, intermixing, borrowing from one another, being shaped and in turn shaping one another. The demand for purity is an enemy of language growth and innovation. Consider the Sanskrit term 'puja'. It has been suggested that it may have not Indo-European but Dravidian roots deriving from the Tamil word '*pu*' for flowers. How many of us know the Sanskrit word 'Veda', or 'vid', is linked to 'wit' and 'witness', the English 'daughter' to *dugdha* (milk), or 'free' linked etymologically to Sanskrit '*preeta*' (love)? Languages which now seem radically distinct from each other have evolved together over a long, interconnected global history.

One must remember the ease and dedication with which people born in one linguistic community embrace languages different from their own. Indeed, we can be attached to more than one language. Just think of the Hebrew/English-speaking Indologist David Shulman's love for Tamil and Telugu. Not to speak of the passionate bilinguality of good translators. So, while deep attachment to one's language is understandable, the pathological obsession with which people defend its purity, uniqueness and superiority is unwarranted, pathetic and unforgivable.

Rajeev Bhargava is Professor, Centre for the Study of Developing Societies, New Delhi

Artificial Intelligence, the law and the future

AI-driven tech will become counterproductive if a legal framework is not devised to regulate it



G.S. BAJPAI & MOHSINA IRSHAD

In February, the Kerala police inducted a robot for police work. The same month, Chennai got its second robot-themed restaurant, where robots not only serve as waiters but also interact with customers in English and Tamil. In Ahmedabad, in December 2018, a cardiologist performed the world's first in-human telerobotic coronary intervention on a patient nearly 32 km away. All these examples symbolise the arrival of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in our everyday lives. AI has several positive applications, as seen in these examples. But the capability of AI systems to learn from experience and to perform autonomously for humans makes AI the most disruptive and self-transformative technology of the 21st century.

If AI is not regulated properly, it is bound to have unmanageable implications. Imagine, for instance, that electricity supply suddenly stops while a robot is performing a surgery, and access to a doctor is lost? And what if a drone hits a human being? These questions have already confronted courts in the U.S. and Germany. All countries, including India, need to be legally prepared to face such kind of disruptive technology.

Challenges of AI

Predicting and analysing legal issues and their solutions, however, is not that simple. For instance, criminal law is going to face drastic challenges. What if an AI-based driverless car gets into an accident that causes harm to humans or damages property? Who should the courts hold liable for the same? Can AI be thought to have knowingly or carelessly caused bodily injury to another? Can robots act as a witness or as a tool for committing various crimes?

Except for Isaac Asimov's 'three laws of robotics' discussed in his short story, 'Runaround', published in 1942, only recently has there been interest across the world to develop a law on smart technologies. In the U.S., there is a lot of discussion about regulation of AI. Germany has come up with ethical rules for autonomous vehicles stipulating that human life should always have priority over property or animal life. China, Japan and Korea are following Germany in deve-

loping a law on self-driven cars.

In India, NITI Aayog released a policy paper, 'National Strategy for Artificial Intelligence', in June 2018, which considered the importance of AI in different sectors. The Budget 2019 also proposed to launch a national programme on AI. While all these developments are taking place on the technological front, no comprehensive legislation to regulate this growing industry has been formulated in the country till date.

Legal personality of AI

First we need a legal definition of AI. Also, given the importance of intention in India's criminal law jurisprudence, it is essential to establish the legal personality of AI (which means AI will have a bundle of rights and obligations), and whether any sort of intention can be attributed to it. To answer the



BUDY GHOSH

question on liability, since AI is considered to be inanimate, a strict liability scheme that holds the producer or manufacturer of the product liable for harm, regardless of the fault, might be an approach to consider. Since privacy is a fundamental right, certain rules to regulate the usage of data possessed by an AI entity should be framed as part of the Personal Data Protection Bill, 2018.

Traffic accidents lead to about 400 deaths a day in India, 90% of which are caused by preventable human errors. Autonomous vehicles that rely on AI can reduce this significantly, through smart warnings and preventive and defensive techniques. Patients sometimes die due to non-availability of specialised doctors. AI can reduce the distance between patients and doctors. But as futurist Gray Scott says, "The real question is, when will we draft an artificial intelligence bill of rights? What will that consist of? And who will get to decide that?"

G.S. Bajpai is Chairperson, Centre for Criminology & Victimology, National Law University, Delhi and Mohsina Irshad is a research scholar at NLU, Delhi

SINGLE FILE

The merits of a free ride

The Delhi government's proposal encourages the use of public transport and is gender-inclusive

AKRITI BHATIA



R.V. MOORTHY

The Delhi government's proposal to make metro and bus travel free for women not only encourages women to use public transport more, but also allows them to occupy public spaces more and exercise their right to work and commute much more freely.

According to various studies, women's choices (and often those of their spouses and families) about work are determined by their commuting experience, including the availability of modes of transport, distance of the workplace from their residence, presence of other women during commute, and safety of the overall route. For many families, it is the cost of commute that determines their choice of work.

A recent report by Deloitte revealed that female labour force participation fell to 26% in 2018 from 36.7% in 2005 amidst the larger unemployment crisis. A move like this could therefore increase productivity and women's participation in the economy.

More importantly, this move could make the Delhi metro (a state-of-the-art, air-conditioned public mode of transport) accessible to working-class women for whom the metro has always been an aspirational vehicle. Given that the principal logic of any public service is that it should be inclusive, free (or at least inexpensive) access to metro trains and buses must also necessarily extend to the urban working poor, students, the differently abled, and senior citizens – albeit with an option of self-exclusion for those who can afford it. Post metro fare hikes in 2017, ridership dropped by over three lakh passengers per day, owing to increased unaffordability.

Ecologically too, in a polluted city like Delhi, universalising cheap access to public transport and disincentivising private vehicles as much as possible is the need of the hour.

Finally, those arguing that this move would reinforce the idea that women are the 'weaker sex' often turn a blind eye to the notion of equality when it comes to acknowledging large gender pay gaps, how women rampantly indulge in unpaid labour, or how public spaces are visibly gendered (there is a near absence of women on the streets of Delhi after a particular time).

This is not to say that the government's proposal will automatically lead to safer environments for women. It must be supplemented with efforts towards greater capacity building, increased frequency of metros and buses, provision of all-women's coaches and buses, street lighting, stepping up last-mile connectivity, deployment of women guards, and so on. And most important is the need for radical attitudinal shifts. Discussing the merits of a proposal like this and learning from examples around the world is important rather than attacking it the minute it is announced.

Akriti Bhatia is a PhD Research Scholar at the Delhi School of Economics



DATA POINT

The toss factor

Tosses are considered important in cricket, as captains decide whether to bat or bowl first depending on the condition of the pitch. Overall, only 46% of the teams that won the toss went on to win the game across World Cups. While the toss did not always play a pivotal role in the outcome, it could have been a factor when the nature of the wicket changed during the course of the game

Host	Year	Matches *	Chose to bat first (%)	Chose to chase (%)	Won toss & match (%)	Chose to bat, won match (%)	Chose to chase, won match
England	1975	15	40	60	46.7	50	44.4
England	1979	15	13.3	80	33.3	0	41.7
England	1983	27	51.9	48.1	51.9	57.1	46.2
India, Pakistan	1987	27	40.7	59.3	40.7	63.6	25
Australia, New Zealand	1992	39	41	53.8	59	62.5	61.9
India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka	1996	38	52.6	39.5	34.2	40	33.3
England	1999	42	33.3	61.9	40.5	35.7	46.2
South Africa	2003	54	48.1	42.6	42.6	57.7	34.8
Carribean	2007	51	33.3	64.7	47.1	47.1	48.5
India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh	2011	49	71.4	24.5	44.9	48.6	41.7
Australia	2015	49	51	46.9	53.1	52	52.2
England	2019	13#	23	77	46.15	33	30.76

*Includes abandoned matches | #Up to the India vs Australia match on June 9

■ In the first two editions of the World Cup in England, bowling first was the popular choice. Choosing to chase a target was also popular in the 1987, 1992, 1999 and 2007 editions

■ Batting first was a popular choice in 1996, but it was in 2011 that taking first strike was almost the norm. Both these editions were played in Asian conditions

■ Winning the toss isn't always a good thing. But in the 1983 and 2015 editions, winning the toss paid off a little more than 50% of the time. In 1979 and 1996, teams that won the toss went on to win barely one third of those games

■ The 1992 edition, held in Australia and New Zealand, saw 59% of the games won by teams that won the toss. This is the highest of the 12 editions

■ In 2019 so far, chasing has been the preferred choice. But teams have lost a higher percentage of games trying to chase a target

Compiled by **Richie Lionell, Gramener Inc.**

FROM The ARCHIVES

FIFTY YEARS AGO JUNE 11, 1969

Secret of P.M.'s freshness

Mrs. Indira Gandhi told Afghan journalists here [Kabul] to-day [June 10] that she derived her strength to carry the heavy burdens of office as Prime Minister from two sources, the mountains and the people. The Prime Minister had been asked by a correspondent here about the secret of her "astounding freshness" despite the fact that she had to carry the heavy burdens of a vast country like India. Mrs. Gandhi replied: "I have known no other life. I have been involved from the earliest stage in the freedom struggle. I think what we are doing in India is a continuation of that struggle because we have to safeguard that freedom against both external and internal dangers. When one wants to do something and feels very strongly about it, one always derives strength to do it." After a pause she said she was a "child of the mountains" and derived strength from them. She also drew energy from the people.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO JUNE 11, 1919.

Bengal Jails.

To-day [June 11] the Calcutta 'Gazette' contains the resolution on Bengal Jail Administration for last year. 83,207 prisoners were admitted to the Bengal jails during last year, being less by 1,500 admitted the previous year. The general health conditions were unfavourable, 3,426 cases of influenza having occurred. The manufacture of quinine tablets continued to be the important industry in jail and [Rupees] 3 ½ lakhs worth of quinine was sold. Juvenile jail at Alipore continues to do excellent work. Further improvements have been made in the school where reading, writing arithmetic and freehand drawing are now taught by a complete staff, while the physical training has produced an excellent effect on the health and spirits of the boys.

CONCEPTUAL

Vote trading

POLITICS

This refers to any manner of voting where people agree to vote in certain ways in which they would not have voted otherwise in exchange for immediate or future benefits. A certain political party that is in Opposition, for instance, may decide to support a certain legislation that it would not have supported otherwise in exchange for favours it expects to receive from the ruling party. Vote trading is considered to be unethical by some political observers who have a problem with the purely transactional nature of such voting. While common in the political arena, vote trading is also present in other places like big businesses and other large organisations.

MORE ON THE WEB

Yuvraj Singh | Career timeline

<http://bit.ly/YuviTimeline>

बिज़नेस स्टैंडर्ड

वर्ष 12 अंक 98

डिजिटल टैक्स पर सहमति

फुकोउका में आयोजित जी-20 शिखर बैठक में डिजिटल बहुराष्ट्रीय कंपनियों पर कर लगाने को लेकर बनी आम सहमति से यह आशा बंधी है कि वैश्विक अर्थव्यवस्था के कामकाज में आमूलचूल बदलाव आएगा। इसकी बारीकियां विशद अध्ययन से सामने आएंगी लेकिन सैद्धांतिक तौर पर इस समझौते को एक सामान्य कराधान व्यवस्था के रूप में समझा

जा सकता है जो तमाम जगहों पर स्वीकार्य है। इतना ही नहीं अमेरिका, जहां दुनिया की तमाम प्रमुख डिजिटल कंपनियां हैं, इस नए प्रस्ताव के खिलाफ है। जबकि ब्रिटेन और फ्रांस समेत तमाम देश इसके समर्थक हैं। उस लिहाज से देखें तो साझा डिजिटल कर सहिता लागू करने के लिए 2020 की प्रस्तावित समय सीमा हकीकत से दूर हो सकती है। बहरहाल,

आगे देखें तो यह सहमति इस बात की द्योतक हो सकती है कि बड़े बहुराष्ट्रीय ऑनलाइन कारोबारों में कर व्यापकता में इजाफा हो। इससे ऐसी कंपनियों को आकर्षित करने में कर बचाने के लिए अनुकूल छोटे देशों की प्रतिस्पर्धात्मक बहुत भी सीमित होगी।

वैश्विक डिजिटल कंपनियां मसलन गूगल, फेसबुक, एमेज़ॉन, ऐपल और तमाम अन्य को आलोचना का सामना करना पड़ रहा था क्योंकि वे कम कर दर वाले देशों में मुनाफा दिखाकर अपना कर घटाती थीं। भले ही अंतिम उपभोक्ता किसी भी देश में हो। ऐसा व्यवहार उचित नहीं है। ये कंपनियां एक प्रकार से कर वंचना का सहारा ले रही थीं। वे अपने क्षेत्रीय मुख्यालय को आयरलैंड, बोत्सवाना और लक्जमबर्ग जैसे देशों में स्थानांतरित करतीं

जहां कर दरें कम हैं। परिणामस्वरूप अन्य देशों में कारोबार से राजस्व के मोर्चे पर अर्जित लाभ पर कम दर पर कर लगता। जी-20 का प्रस्ताव ऐसे मुनाफे पर एक साझा न्यूनतम कर लागू कर सकता है। या फिर यह ऐसी अंतरराष्ट्रीय सहमति बना सकता है कि ऐसे मुनाफे पर उन स्थानों पर कर लगेगा जहां वास्तविक राजस्व प्राप्ति हुई है। भले ही कंपनी वहां मौजूद हो या नहीं। एक और विकल्प यह है कि समझौते के तहत एक देश में पंजीकृत मुनाफे को उन देशों में पुनर्आवंटित किया जाए जहां मुनाफा हुआ हो।

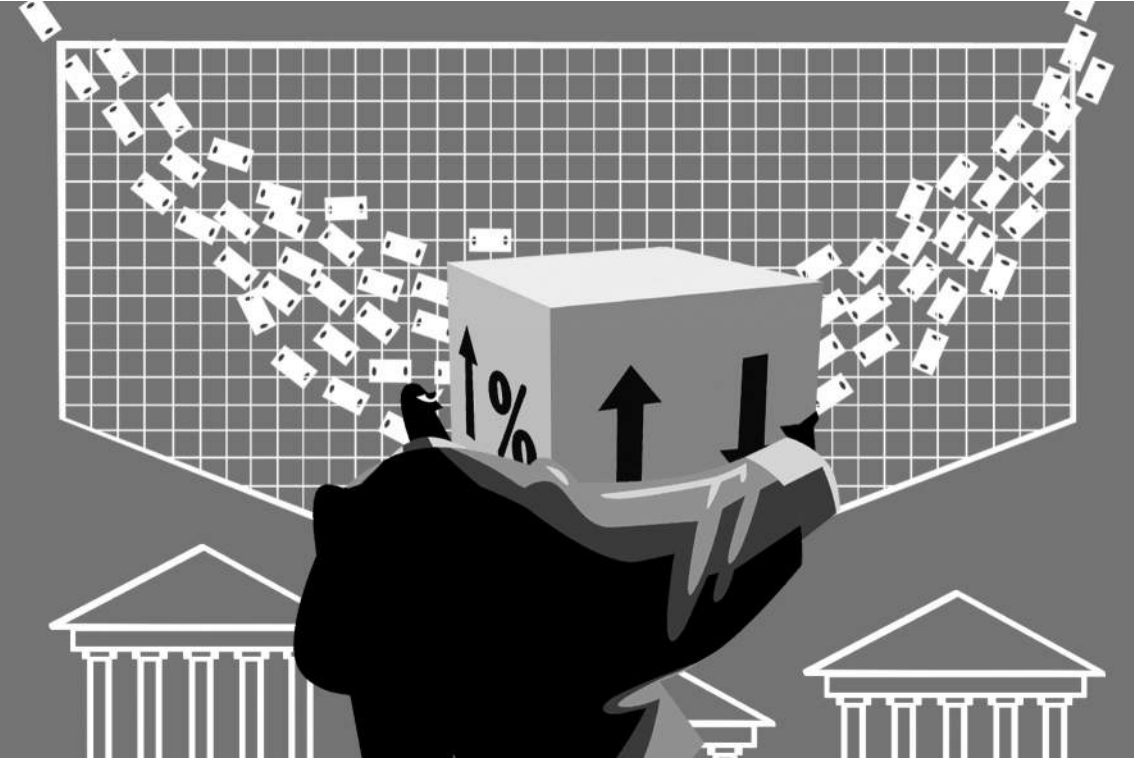
इस सहमति को व्यावहारिक बनाने में कुछ बाधाएं भी हैं। पहली बात तो यह कि डिजिटल कंपनी की कोई स्वीकार्य परिभाषा नहीं है। कई मामलों में कंपनियों के पास अलग-अलग

क्षेत्रों के विविध राजस्व माध्यम हैं। उदाहरण के लिए हो सकता है कंपनी भौतिक वस्तुओं की बिक्री कर रही हो जो आयातित भी हो सकती हैं। ऐसी कंपनी क्लाउड होस्टिंग सेवा भी दे सकती है और कई देशों में सर्वर भी चला सकती है। संभव है वह विज्ञापन राजस्व एक देश से जुटाए जबकि कार्यक्रम प्रसारण दूसरे देश में करे। वह विभिन्न देशों की सीमाओं से परे फिनटेक सेवाएं भी चला सकती है। या बतें डिजिटल की परिभाषा को जटिल बनाती हैं।

तमाम सीमाओं से परे कर के उचित आकलन के लिए और कंपनियों की कर्चवंचना या अधिकारियों के दोहरे कराधान से बचने के लिए राष्ट्रीय कर अधिकारियों के बीच उच्चस्तरीय सहयोग की आवश्यकता

होगी। भारत, चीन और रूस समेत तमाम देशों की यह मांग भी इसे जटिल बनाती है कि उनके यहां संग्रहीत डेटा उनकी सीमा के भीतर ही रहे। यह मुद्दा बातचीत में गतिरोध ला सकता है।

जमीनी बाधाओं के बावजूद, जी-20 का यह प्रस्ताव डिजिटल कारोबार के भविष्य को लेकर दुनिया के रुख में अहम बदलाव को प्रस्तुत करता है। इसका असर आगे चलकर कर संहिताओं में बदलाव के रूप में भी दिखना चाहिए। यह भारत और दक्षिण अफ्रीका जैसे बड़े बाजारों के अनुकूल होगा बजाय कि बोत्सवाना जैसे छोटे टैक्स हैवन देशों के। यह बेहतर विकल्प नजर आता है। जिस देश में राजस्व अर्जित हो, अर्जित मुनाफे पर कर में उसकी भूमिका होनी ही चाहिए।



विजय सिन्हा

बाजार और ज्यादा की नहीं कर सकते थे उम्मीद

दर में कटौती, मौद्रिक नीति के रुव में बदलाव व अर्थव्यवस्था में ‘पर्याप्त’ नकदी सुनिश्चित करने की आरबीआई की प्रतिबद्धता से बैंकों को ऋण दरें घटाने के लिए प्रोत्साहन मिलेगा। बता रहे हैं तमाल बंदोपाध्याय

एशिया की तीसरी सबसे बड़ी अर्थव्यवस्था के केंद्रीय बैंक ने नीतिगत दरों में 25 आधार अंक की कटौती की घोषणा कर दी है। भारतीय रिजर्व बैंक (आरबीआई) ने लगातार तीसरी बार कटौती की है। केंद्रीय बैंक ने मौद्रिक नीति का रुख भी तटस्थ से नरम कर दिया है। दर में कटौती से भी अहम पहलू नीतिगत रुख में बदलाव है। केंद्रीय बैंक ने फरवरी में अपना रुख ‘सख्त’ से ‘तटस्थ’ किया था और वर्तमान चक्र में पहली बार दर घटाई थी।

सैद्धांतिक रूप से तटस्थ रुख का मतलब है कि नीति की दिशा कोई भी हो सकती है। आरबीआई गवर्नर शक्तिकांत दास ने मौद्रिक नीति की घोषणा के बाद मीडिया से जो कुछ कहा, उससे यह संकेत मिलता है कि अभी दरों में बढ़ोतरी की कोई संभावना नहीं है। और दरों में और कटौती हो सकती है। यह कटौती चालू वित्त वर्ष में अनुमानित राजकोषीय घाटे और मॉनसून पर निर्भर करेगी। हमें अनुमानित राजकोषीय घाटे का पता 5 जुलाई को केंद्रीय बजट पेश किए जाने पर चलेगा। मॉनसून की चाल को देखना इसलिए अहम होगा क्योंकि इसका महंगाई पर असर पड़ता है।

एक अन्य पहलू गवर्नर का यह बयान है कि आरबीआई सभी उत्पादक कार्यों के लिए आर्थिक तंत्र में पर्याप्त नकदी सुनिश्चित करेगा। हाल के वर्षों में ऐसा पहली बार हो रहा है कि केंद्रीय बैंक ने आर्थिक तंत्र में ‘पर्याप्त नकदी’ सुनिश्चित करने का वादा किया है। आरबीआई पहले की नीतियों में आर्थिक तंत्र में नकदी डालने के उपायों का जिक्र करता था। ये उपाय तथाकथित खुले बाजार की खरीद प्रक्रियाओं (ओएमओ) के तहत बाजार से सरकारी बॉन्डों की खरीद, लंबी अवधि की परिवर्तनशील-दर रिपो नीलामी, विदेशी मुद्रा खरीद/बिक्री लेनदेन और तथाकथित नकदी कवरेज अनुपात नियम आदि हैं। लेकिन ये उपाय इतनी स्पष्टता के साथ आगे की दिशा नहीं बताते थे।

पर्याप्त नकदी सुनिश्चित करने की घोषणा से बहुत लोगों की चिंताएं दूर होंगी और मौद्रिक नीति के लाभ को ग्राहकों तक पहुंचाने में मदद मिलेगी। जून के प्रारंभ में आर्थिक तंत्र में नकदी का दैनिक औसत स्तर अधिशेष हो गया, जो अप्रैल और मई में सरकार के सीमित खर्च के कारण कम था।

आरबीआई की नीतिगत दर घटकर 5.75 फीसदी पर आ गई है। इससे पहले यह इस स्तर पर जुलाई, 2010 में थी। उस समय

केंद्रीय बैंक नीतिगत दर में कटौती कर रहा था और आर्थिक तंत्र में नकदी झोंक रहा था ताकि मंदी के असर से बचा जा सके। अमेरिका के जाने-माने निवेश बैंक लीमन ब्रदर्स होलडिंग आईएनसी के दिवालिया होने के बाद मंदी ने विश्व के एक बड़े हिस्से को अपने आगोश में ले लिया था। हमने दरों में अब जैसी लगातार कटौती हाल के वर्षों में जनवरी-जुलाई, 2015 और जनवरी-जून, 2013 में देखी है। जनवरी-जुलाई, 2015 में गवर्नर रघुराम राजन ने दर 8 फीसदी से घटाकर 7.25 फीसदी की थी। वहीं जनवरी-जून, 2013 में डी सुब्बाराव ने भी दर 8 फीसदी से घटाकर 7.25 फीसदी की थी।

सुब्बाराव ने यह कदम आर्थिक वृद्धि को बढ़ाने के लिए उठाया था, जो मार्च 2013 में समाप्त वित्त वर्ष में घटकर अनुमानित 5 फीसदी के स्तर पर आ गई थी। यह एक दशक में सबसे कम वृद्धि दर थी। हालांकि उस समय जब आरबीआई ने मौद्रिक नीति का रुख नरम किया तो सुब्बाराव ने दरों में कटौती की और उम्मीदों को नियंत्रित करने का प्रयास किया। उन्होंने चेताया कि महंगाई में बढ़ोतरी के जोखिम से ‘आगे और मौद्रिक नरमी की मामूली गुंजाइश’ बची है।

वर्ष 2015 में दरों में कटौती का फैसला

नीतिगत फैसलों से बाहर लिया गया था। निस्संदेह इस समय ब्याज दर का फैसला मौद्रिक नीति समिति (एमपीसी) ले रही है, लेकिन बीते वर्षों में दोनों मौकों पर गवर्नर ने ब्याज दर में कटौती के फैसले लिए थे।

सबसे अहम बात यह है कि फरवरी और अप्रैल में दर कटौती के दौरान एमपीसी के सभी सदस्यों की आम सहमति नहीं थी। लेकिन जून की कटौती के फैसले में सभी की सहमति रही है। एमपीसी का कोई भी सदस्य दर कटौती के खिलाफ नहीं था। इसके अलावा सभी छह सदस्य नीतिगत रुख में बदलाव के भी पक्ष में रहे हैं।

इससे यह धारणा मजबूत होती है कि अगर राजकोषीय घाटा और महंगाई नियंत्रण में रहते हैं तो इस साल दरों में और कटौती की जा सकती हैं ताकि देश की वृद्धि को रफ्तार दी जा सके। आरबीआई ने वित्त वर्ष 2020 के लिए सकल घरेलू उत्पाद (जीडीपी) का अपना अनुमान 20 आधार अंक घटाकर 7 फीसदी कर दिया है। केंद्रीय बैंक ने अपना महंगाई का अनुमान भी घटया है। खुदरा महंगाई अप्रैल में मामूली बढ़ोतरी के साथ 2.9 फीसदी रही है, लेकिन कथाकथित कोरे या गैर-खाद्य, गैर-तेल विनिर्माण महंगाई तेजी से घटी है। यह मानते हुए कि मॉनसून सामान्य रहेगा, खुदरा महंगाई 2020 की दूसरी छमाही में 3.4 से 3.7 फीसदी अनुमानित है। यह पहले के अनुमान 3.5 से 3.8 फीसदी से मामूली कम है।

भारत ने मार्च तिमाही में विश्व की सबसे तेजी से बढ़ती अर्थव्यवस्था का तमगा गंवा दिया। अब चीन ने यह तमगा हासिल कर लिया है। मार्च में समाप्त वित्त वर्ष 2019 की अंतिम तिमाही में आर्थिक वृद्धि घटकर 5.8 फीसदी रही, जो पिछली 20 तिमाहियों में सबसे कम है। इससे भारत की जीडीपी की सालाना वृद्धि भी घटकर 6.8 फीसदी पर आ गई। यह मोदी सरकार के पहले कार्यकाल में सबसे कम है।

फरवरी से अब तक नीतिगत दरों में 50 आधार अंकों की कटौती की गई है, लेकिन बैंकों ने अपने ग्राहकों को इसका केवल 21 फीसदी ही लाभ दिया है। बैंकों के ग्राहकों को पूरा लाभ पहुंचाने में कुछ समय लग सकता है, लेकिन आर्थिक तंत्र में पर्याप्त नकदी सुनिश्चित करने और रुख में बदलाव की इस नीति से मौद्रिक लाभ ग्राहकों तक पहुंचाने के मुद्दे को हल करने की दिशा में प्रयास किया गया है।

जब हम आरबीआई की नकदी प्रबंधन रणनीति पर कोई टोस खाका बना लेंगे तो दरों में कटौती का लाभ ग्राहकों तक जल्द पहुंचा पाना संभव होगा। आरबीआई ने नकदी प्रबंधन ढांचे की समीक्षा के लिए एक अंतरिक समिति बनाई है। इससे पहले ऐसी समीक्षा 2014 में हुई थी।

यह समिति अपनी रिपोर्ट जुलाई के मध्य में सौंपेगी। इसे वर्तमान नकदी प्रबंधन ढांचे को आसान बनाने, लक्ष्यों में स्पष्टता लाने और केंद्रीय बैंक द्वारा इस्तेमाल किए जाने वाले उपायों और नकदी टूटों के बारे में उपाय सुझाने हैं। आरबीआई की गुरुवार की घोषणा उम्मीदों के मुताबिक है। बाजार इससे अधिक उम्मीद नहीं कर सकते थे।

(लेखक बिज़नेस स्टैंडर्ड के सलाहकार संपादक, लेखक और जन स्मॉल फाइनैंस बैंक लिमिटेड में वरिष्ठ सलाहकार हैं।)

भारतीय कंपनियों का भी ‘खान मार्केट गैंग’!

पिछले कुछ दिनों से ‘खान मार्केट गैंग’ चर्चा में है। यह समाचार-पत्रों के शीर्षकों, सोशल मीडिया और लगभग हर भारतीय की सामान्य बातचीत में मौजूद है। निस्संदेह तथाकथित उदारवादी खुद के सुखियों में आने से खुश नहीं हैं। नरेंद्र मोदी सरकारी की प्रचंड जीत से इन स्व-घोषित बुद्धिजीवियों के लगभग बेरोजगार होने का खतरा है। ऐसे में उन्हें ऐसे शांत कोने की जरूरत है, जहां वे बैठकर अपने दुखों को भुला सकें। सत्तारूढ़ सरकार इस गैंग को ताकतवर वंशवादी अमीर अल्पसंख्यकों के रूप में देखती है, जो सत्ता के सभी केंद्रों और अभिव्यक्ति के सभी माध्यमों पर अपना नियंत्रण चाहते हैं।वे अपने समूह में किसी बाहरी को प्रवेश नहीं करने देना चाहते हैं।

इस गैंग के जैसा ही एक गैंग भारत के पारिवारिक नियंत्रण वाले कारोबारों में भी मौजूद है। इस समूह के कुछ सदस्य पिछले कुछ समय से बचने के लिए भाग रहे हैं। लेकिन फिर भी ऐसे बहुत से प्रवर्तक हैं, जिनका मानना ​​है कि उन्हें अपनी कंपनियों पर नियंत्रण का अधिकार मिला हुआ है, जबकि उनका ज्यादा कुछ दांव पर नहीं लगा हुआ है। उनका मानना ​​है कि वे अपनी कंपनियों में दीर्घावधि मूल्य सृजन के सबसे बेहतर संरक्षक हैं। कुछ ने बाहरी पेशवरों को मुख्य कार्याधिकारी बनाया है, लेकिन वे मरने तक इन पेशवरों को नियंत्रित करते हैं।

जेट एयरवेज के संस्थापक और पूर्व चेयरमैन नरेश गोयल का ही उदाहरण लें। कंपनी का सीईओ नियुक्त करने के बावजूद गोयल और उनकी पत्नी ने जेट को अपनी एक दुकान के रूप में चलाया, जहां उन दोनों की मंजूरी के बिना कुछ नहीं हुआ। गोयल हमेशा अहम फैसलों में शामिल होते थे और आम तौर पर सीईओ के पास सीमित कार्यकारी शक्तियां होती थीं और वे लंबे समय तक नहीं टिक पाते थे। इससे सीईओ को नियुक्त करने की प्रक्रिया महज एक कलाक बन गई थी। जेट में 11 वर्षों के दौरान आठ सीईओ बने हैं।

उदाहरण के लिए गोयल ने पेरिस एयर शो में मीडिया के सामने घोषणा की थी कि जेट 20 नए लंबे-चौड़े विमानों के ऑर्डर देगी। उन्होंने कहा कि इन विमानों को विमानन कंपनी के बेड़े में

सोचने को मजबूर करते हैं कि उनका कोई विकल्प नहीं है। उनका कोई विकल्प न होने का विचार उन्हें इस विचार से भी ज्यादा आनंद देता है कि उनके जाने के बाद संगठन खत्म हो जाएगा। हालांकि आपकी प्रतिभा का इससे कोई बेहतर सबूत नहीं हो सकता कि आप कंपनी से जाने के बाद उससे दूर हो जाते हैं। कुछ प्रवर्तक कंपनी के लिए खुद को इतना जरूरी समझ लेते हैं कि वे कंपनी को छोड़ने से ही इनकार कर देते हैं। भले ही इसके लिए पूरे बोर्ड की सेवानिवृत्ति की उम्र में बार-बार बढ़ोतरी हो क्यों न करनी पड़े।

इस बात में कोई संदेह नहीं है कि 1990 के दशक के प्रारंभ से पारिवारिक स्वामित्व वाले बहुत से कारोबार गुप्तनामी में चले गए हैं। मैकिंजी के हाल के एक अध्ययन में कहा गया है कि भारत में पारिवारिक स्वामित्व वाले कारोबारों में से केवल 7 फीसदी ही तीसरी पीढ़ी से आगे बढ़ पाए हैं। वैश्विक कार्याधिकारी खोज कंपनी एगोन जेंडर के एक श्वेत पत्र के मुताबिक सबसे महत्वपूर्ण सवाल समय है। उद्यमी के लिए पहला कदम यह समझना है कि भविष्य की यात्रा के लिए एक अलग अगुआ की जरूरत है। आम तौर पर ऐसा दौर होता है, जब संगठन की प्रगति औपचारिक संगठन, प्रणाली और प्रक्रियाओं के अभाव में धीमी हो जाती है।

भारतीय कंपनियों की समस्या यह है कि प्रवर्तक पेशवरों को उनकी भूमिका स्पष्ट किए बिना नियुक्त करते हैं। उदाहरण के लिए इस बारे में करार करना जरूरी है कि किन मामलों का फैसला परिवार लगा और वे कौनसे मामले होंगे, जिनमें वे कचेरों के फैसलों का समर्थन करेंगे। कंपनियों में ऐसा औपचारिक ढांचा और प्रक्रिया होनी जरूरी है जैसी आपने महिंद्रा और हर्ष मारीवाली ने अपने यहां लागू की है। ज्यादातर प्रवर्तक प्रणाली में काफी अस्पष्टताएं छोड़ देते हैं ताकि प्रवर्तक किसी भी समय अंदर आ सकें।

यह उचित समय है कि कॉर्पोरेट इंडिया का खान मार्केट गैंग भी अपनी गलती को महसूस कर उसमें सुधार करे। अगर सम्मान करना आपकी कंपनी की संस्कृति है तो असली प्रतिभाएं आपके अनुमान से पहले निकासी का बटन दबाएंगी।

कानाफूसी

कारोबार पर असर

राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा नीति के मसौदे में त्रिभाषा फॉर्मूले का प्रस्ताव रखा गया है। यह प्रस्ताव तमिलनाडु में गहन राजनीतिक बहस का विषय बन गया है। द्रविड़ राजनीतिक दलों ने इसे हिंदी विरोध का आधार बना लिया है। दिलचस्प यह है कि भारतीय जनता पार्टी के नेता एच राजा ने दिवटर पर उन स्कूलों की एक सूची जारी की है जो द्रविड़ मुन्नेत्र कषगम के नेताओं द्वारा संचालित हैं। राजा का आरोप है कि द्रमुक नेता स्ट्यालिन की बेटी भी स्कूल चलाती हैं और ये सारे नेता त्रिभाषा फॉर्मूले के खिलाफ इसलिए एकजुट हुए हैं क्योंकि त्रिभाषा फॉर्मूला लागू होने के बाद उनके स्कूल के कारोबार पर प्रतिकूल असर पड़ेगा। राजा के मुताबिक अकेले चेन्नई शहर में द्रमुक नेता और उनके परिवार कम से कम पांच स्कूल चलाते हैं। जबकि पूरे प्रदेश में इनकी तादाद एक दर्जन से अधिक है।

गठबंधन करेगा बचाव

लोकसभा चुनाव के पहले कांग्रेस ने दलित नेता प्रकाश आंबेडकर की अगुआई वाले महाराष्ट्र के वंचित बहुजन आघाडी (वीबीए) पर भाजपा की भी टीम होने का आरोप लगाया था। अब ऐसा प्रतीत हो रहा है कि कांग्रेस की महाराष्ट्र प्रदेश इकाई आगामी विधानसभा चुनाव के पहले वीबीए के साथ चुनावपूर्व गठबंधन करने के लिए चर्चा कर रही है। आंबेडकर देश के संविधान निर्माता बाबा साहेब भीमराव आंबेडकर के पोते हैं और उनकी पार्टी को हैदराबाद के नेता असदुद्दीन औवैसी की ऑल इंडिया मजलिस ए इस्तेादुल मुसलमीन का समर्थन प्राप्त है। दोनों दलों ने लोकसभा चुनाव साथ मिलकर लड़ा था और अच्छी खासी तादाद में वोट भी हासिल किए थे। हालांकि उन्हें प्रदेश की 48 में से एक भी लोकसभा सीट पर जीत नहीं मिल सकी थी। कांग्रेस की हताशा भी समझ में आ रही है। दरअसल पश्चिम बंगाल में तुणमूल कांग्रेस की तरह महाराष्ट्र में भी कांग्रेस नेताओं के टूटने का खतरा उत्पन्न हो गया है। महाराष्ट्र कांग्रेस अध्यक्ष अशोक चव्हाण ने आरोप लगाया है कि मुख्यमंत्री देवेंद्र फडणवीस कांग्रेस विधायकों से बात कर उन्हें भाजपा में शामिल होने का आमंत्रण दे रहे हैं।



आपका पक्ष

अब 5जी सेवा का जल्द होगा आगाज

संचार मंत्री रविशंकर प्रसाद ने अपने मंत्रालय का कार्यभार संभालते हुए कहा कि हमारा पहला लक्ष्य 100 दिन के अंदर देश में 5जी सेवा का परीक्षण और अगले साल से इस सेवा को सक्रिय करना है। 5जी मोबाइल फोन वायरलेस सेवा की पांचवीं पीढ़ी है। पिछले जेनरेशन की तुलना में इसकी गति काफी अच्छी होगी। यह 2जी, 3जी और 4जी की पूरक होगी। भारत में इस सेवा पर काम की शुरुआत मई 2013 में हो गई थी। 5जी तकनीक के बाद इंटरनेट के उपयोगकर्ताओं को तेज गति से डेटा मिलेगा। इससे बेहतर नेटवर्क कवरेज मिलेगा और मोबाइल उपकरणों की बैटरी भी कम खर्च होगी। मोबाइल तकनीक की पहली पीढ़ी।जी एनालॉग सेवा थी जिसे सेल्यूलर फोन के माध्यम से उपलब्ध कराया गया था। दूसरी पीढ़ी 2जी डिजिटल तकनीक पर आधारित सेवा थी जिसकी स्पेक्ट्रम क्षमता, सुरक्षा और लिखित संदेश सेवा काफी बेहतर थी। 3जी



तकनीक का लक्ष्य संचार सेवाओं को तेज गति और सुरक्षा प्रदान करना था। इसके बाद 4जी तकनीक आई जो आईपी अर्थात इंटरनेट प्रोटोकोल सुविधा से लैस है और इसकी औसत संचार गति एक जीबी प्रति सेकंड है। 5जी मोबाइल संचार तकनीक इससे भी ज्यादा विकसित है। यह तेज गति वाली 5जी देश में डिजिटल

5जी मोबाइल नेटवर्क सेवा पर काम चल रहा है और संभवतः अगले साल शुरू हो जाएगा

क्रांति में अहम भूमिका निभाएगी जिससे भारत के सामाजिक परिवर्तन का लक्ष्य तेजी से हासिल किया जा सकेगा।

मनीष कुमार, पटना

पाठक अपनी राय हमें इस पते पर भेज सकते हैं : संपादक, बिजनेस स्टैंडर्ड लिमिटेड, 4, बहादुर शाह जफर मार्ग, नई दिल्ली - 110002. आप हमें ईमेल भी कर सकते हैं : lettershindi@bsmail.in
उस जगह का उल्लेख अवश्य करें, जहां से आप ईमेल कर रहे हैं।

पृथ्वी को बचाने के लिए संकल्प

पृथ्वी को बचाने के लिए लोगों को संकल्प लेना जरूरी हो गया है। यह संकल्प बढ़ती आबादी को कम करना, अनाज और जल की बरबादी रोकना, प्लास्टिक के उपयोग में कमी लाना और पौधरोपण करना है। आज आबादी तेजी से बढ़ रही है। संयुक्त राष्ट्र की रिपोर्ट के अनुसार भारत की आबादी 1.2 प्रतिशत से बढ़ रही है और चीन की 0.5 प्रतिशत से बढ़ रही है। भारत की आबादी 136 करोड़ पार कर चुकी है। जनसंख्या के हिसाब से संसाधन की कमी के कारण देश में भुखमरी, बेरोजगारी, गरीबी आदि समस्या मौजूद है। इसलिए बढ़ती आबादी को रोकना जरूरी हो गया है। ग्लोबल हंगर इंडेक्स रिपोर्ट में भारत का स्कोर 31.1 रहा जो देश में गंभीर भुखमरी को दर्शाता है। इसलिए लोगों को संकल्प लेना चाहिए कि वे शादी, पार्टी, रेस्तरांट में अन्न की बरबादी नहीं होने देंगे। आज जल की कमी की समस्या से जूझ रहा है। राजस्थान में 1,500 फुट गहराई में भी पानी नहीं मिल पा रहा है। प्लास्टिक का रोक लगाना भी जरूरी हो गया है क्योंकि इसके कचरे की समस्या गहराने लगी है। प्लास्टिक का विघटन नहीं होने के कारण इसके कचरे की समस्या बढ़ती जा रही है। केंद्रीय प्रदूषण नियंत्रण बोर्ड की एक रिपोर्ट के अनुसार देश में प्रतिदन 15,000 टन प्लास्टिक कचरा निकलता है। इस समस्या का उचित प्रबंध नहीं होने से गली, मोहल्ले और सड़कों पर प्लास्टिक का कचरा देखा जा सकता है। अगले 10 वर्षों में पृथ्वी का तापमान और 4 डिग्री बढ़ जाएगा। वन सर्वे की रिपोर्ट के मुताबिक 24.39 प्रतिशत जमीन वन से घिरी है और 8 प्रतिशत वन क्षेत्र विकसित करने की जरूरत है। अतः लोगों को पौधरोपण का संकल्प लेना चाहिए।

दैनिक जागरण

साहित्य विचार और भाव की साझा अभिव्यक्ति है

भरोसा जगाने वाला फैसला

देश को हिला देने वाले कठुआ कांड पर फैसला न्याय के प्रति आम आदमी के भरोसे को बढ़ाने वाला है। यह अच्छा हुआ कि इस मामले में फैसला आने में अधिक समय नहीं लगा, लेकिन उचित यह होगा कि ऊंची अदालतों में इस मामले का निपटारा और भी तेजी से हो। यह इसलिए आवश्यक है, ताकि दुष्कर्म और हत्या के इस जघन्य मामले में किसी तरह की संकीर्ण राजनीति न हो सके। इसे विस्मृत नहीं किया जाना चाहिए कि इस मामले में कैसी विभाजनकारी राजनीति हुई थी। एक समय तो यह मामला जम्मू बनाम कश्मीर में तब्दील हो गया था। इतना ही नहीं, इस प्रकरण को सांप्रदायिक रंग देने की भी खूब कोशिश हुई थी। जिन्होंने भी ऐसा किया उन्हें सबक सीखना चाहिए। क्या इससे खराब बात और कोई हो सकती है कि समाज और देश की बदनामी करने वाले अपराध के गंभीर मामलों को सांप्रदायिक रंग दिया जाए? कठुआ कांड पर एक ऐसे समय फैसला आया है जब बच्चियों और महिलाओं के साथ बर्बर क्रिस्म के अपराध सामने आ रहे हैं। अपराध के ये मामले कानून एवं व्यवस्था के समक्ष गंभीर सवाल खड़े करने और साथ ही सभ्य समाज को शर्मिंदा करने वाले हैं। निःसंदेह ऐसे मामले बच्चियों और महिलाओं की सुरक्षा को लेकर चिंता पैदा करने वाले भी हैं। इन दिनों अलीगढ़ जिले की एक बच्ची की हत्या के मामले ने देश का ध्यान अपनी ओर खींचा हुआ है तो इसीलिए कि उसे बहुत बेरहमी से मारा गया। इस पर हैरत नहीं कि अलीगढ़ के रंगटे खड़े कर देने वाले इस मामले की तुलना कठुआ कांड से की जा रही है।

चूंकि जघन्य अपराध के कुछ ही मामले व्यापक चर्चा और चिंता का कारण बनते हैं इसलिए ऐसे उपाय करने की सख्त जरूरत है जिससे गंभीर क्रिस्म के हर अपराध के दोषियों को बिना किसी देरी के कठोर दंड का पात्र बनाया जा सके। यह एक तथ्य है कि अक्सर बच्चियों और महिलाओं के साथ होने वाले गंभीर क्रिस्म के अपराध न तो सुर्खियां बन पाते हैं और न ही उनकी दंग से जांच हो पाती है। इस विस्मृति को प्राथमिकता के आधार पर दूर किया जाना चाहिए। निःसंदेह इसके लिए पुलिस को और संवेदनशील बनना होगा और साथ ही अदालतों प्रक्रिया में तेजी भी लानी होगी, लेकिन इसी के साथ उस दूषित मानसिकता का भी उपचार करना होगा जिसके चलते बच्चियों और महिलाओं के प्रति यौन अपराध बढ़ते चले जा रहे हैं। कभी-कभी तो ऐसा लगता है कि यौन अपराधियों को किसी का डर ही नहीं रह गया है। उनकी घृणित हरकतों इसके बावजूद बढ़ती जा रही हैं कि दुष्कर्म और हत्या के संगीन मामलों में मौत की सजा का भी प्रावधान कर दिया गया है। निःसंदेह कठोर कानूनों की अपनी अहमियत होती है, लेकिन केवल उनके जरिये ही हालात नहीं सुधारा जा सकते। कठोर कानूनों के साथ ही यह भी जरूरी है कि महिलाओं के प्रति लोगों की मानसिकता बदले। यह काम घर-परिवार और समाज को करना होगा। सब कुछ पुलिस और अदालतों के भरोसे नहीं छोड़ा जा सकता। यह चिंता समाज को ही करनी होगा कि वह कैसे समाज का निर्माण कर रहा है?

पर्यटन विकास

मैदानों में भीषण गर्मी के बीच सुकून के कुछ पल बिताने उत्तराखंड के पहाड़ों की ओर रुख कर रहे सैलानियों की तादाद देख खुश हुआ जा सकता है। आखिर पर्यटन और तीर्थाटन प्रदेश की आर्थिक का यह एक बड़ा स्रोत हैं। सरकार भी इसीलिए पर्यटन विकास पर फोकस कर रही है। तमाम योजनाएं और आयोजन कर पर्यटन को प्रोत्साहित करने पर जोर दिया जा रहा है, लेकिन सवाल यह है कि क्या इस दिशा में सरकार योजनाबद्ध तरीके से आगे बढ़ रही है। यह सवाल इसलिए जरूरी है कि इस सप्ताह मसूरी और नैनीताल के साथ ही बदरनाथ, केदारनाथ, गंगोत्री और यमुनोत्री जैसे तीर्थस्थल और चार धाम मार्गों पर छायाी अव्यवस्थाएं सैलानियों पर भारी पड़ रही हैं। मसूरी और नैनीताल में हर दिन करीब 12 से 15 हजार पर्यटक पहुंच रहा है। आलम यह है कि मसूरी में सैलानियों को रात बिताने के लिए टौर तक नहीं मिल रहा। नतीजतन बड़ी संख्या में लोग सड़क किनारे सोने पर मजबूर हैं। मसूरी और नैनीताल में वाहनों का दबाव इस कदर बढ़ गया है कि आसपास के शहरों की यातायात व्यवस्था भी चरमरा गई है। चार धाम मार्गों पर भी जाम से लोहा पस्त है ही, वाहनों के लिए पेट्रोल और डीजल भी मयस्सर नहीं हो पा रहा है। रुद्रप्रयाग और चमोली में पेट्रोल-डीजल की अघोषित राशनिंग की स्थिति बनी है। इसमें कोई दो राय नहीं पर्यटकों का सैलाव उत्साह जगाने वाला है, लेकिन इन अव्यवस्थाओं के बीच वे क्या संदेश लेकर लौट रहे होंगे, इसकी कल्पना ही की जा सकती है। यात्रा से पहले व्यवस्थाएं पुख्ता होने के दावा कर रहे अधिकारियों को क्या इस तरह का अनुमान था। यदि था तो इंतजाम में कहां कमी रह गई। दरअसल अगर जरूरत यह भी है कि मसूरी और नैनीताल के अलावा अन्य स्थल विकसित किए जाएं। इससे मसूरी और नैनीताल जैसे शहरों पर दबाव कम होगा। यह विडंबना ही है कि गढ़वाल और कुमाऊं में कुदरत का खजाना बिखरा हुआ है, लेकिन हम इन स्थानों को पहचान नहीं दिला पाए। मसलन, खिर्सी-लैंसडौन पर्यटन सकिंट और महाभारत सकिंट जैसी योजनाओं को फाइलों से बाहर निकालने की आवश्यकता है। यदि प्रदेश को पर्यटन के लिहाज से विकसित करना है तो सरकारी क्षेत्र में प्रशिक्षित और पेशेवर लोगों को तवज्जो दी जाए।

कब थमेंगी दुष्कर्म की वारदातें

अंशुमाली रस्तोगी

अलीगढ़ की घटना से हर कोई सहमा हुआ है। हर तरफ से यही गाम उठ रही है कि दोषियों को इतनी कड़ी से कड़ी सजा दी जाए कि उनकी क्या देखने-सुनने वाले तक की रूह कांप उठे। लेकिन ऐसा होगा क्या? क्या हम पिछले साल कठुआ में एक मासूम के साथ हुए दुष्कर्म को भूल गए हैं। तब भी दुष्कर्मियों को कड़ी सजा देने की मांग हर ओर से उठी थी। सोशल मीडिया से लेकर अखबारों तक में उक्त खबर छाई रही थी, मगर वक्त गुजरने के साथ सब कुछ शांत हो गया। अब आए फैसेल में छह दोषियों में से तीन को उक्त कैद और तीन को पांच साल की सजा सुनाई गई है। यही शांति कचोटती है बहुत। हम इतना मतलबी और असंवेदनशील समाज बन चुके हैं कि हर जघन्य घटना के कुछ दिन बीतने के बाद उसे यूं भूला देते हैं, मानो कुछ हुआ ही न हो।

ऐसा भी नहीं कि बच्चियों के साथ दुष्कर्म की वारदातें थम गईं या उनमें गिरावट आई है। नही ऐसा कुछ भी नहीं हुआ है। बल्कि ये निरंतर बढ़ती हो जा रही हैं। स्थिति यह है कि हर दो से पांच मिन्ट में कोई न कोई बच्ची या महिला यौन उत्पीड़न का शिकार बनती है। एक

हम इतने असंवेदनशील और स्वाथीं बन चुके हैं कि हर जघन्य घटना के कुछ दिन बाद उसे यूं भुला देते हैं मानो कुछ हुआ न हो

तरफ बेटी बचाओ, बेटी पढ़ाओ के नारे हैं, दूसरी तरह बेटीयों के साथ होना वाले दुष्कर्म मनुष्य का पाशविक चेहरा ही सामने रख रहे हैं। हवस में आदमी इतना अंधा हो चुका कि उसे यह तक इन्म्य वक्त गुजरने के साथ सब कुछ शांत हो गया। अब

दरअसल ऐसे मामले पुलिस के ढीले-ढाले रवैये से भी दबा दिए जाते हैं। उक्त बच्ची के मामले में भी तो पहले यही हुआ था। वह गनीमत यह रही कि मामला सोशल मीडिया पर आने से सुर्खियों में बन गया और फिर परत-दर-परत खुलने लगी। देश की पुलिस और व्यवस्था अगर सख्त और सजग हो तो ऐसे मामले हों ही नहीं। दोषियों को भी तुरंत सजा मिल जाए। जो भी



सुरेंद्र किशोर

पिछले पांच वर्षों में पहली बार उन माफिया तत्वों के खिलाफ कार्रवाई की शुरुआत हुई जिनकी चर्चा वोहरा रपट में है, लेकिन अभी उन तत्वों पर निर्णायक प्रहार बाकी है

भाजपा अध्यक्ष अमित शाह के मंत्री बनते और गृह मंत्रालय संभालते ही उनके समक्ष पेश चुनौतियों की चर्चा होने लगी है। इन चुनौतियों में नक्सलवाद से लेकर कश्मीर के विगड़े हालात की भी गिनती हो रही है, लेकिन उनके सामने एक अन्य चुनौती माफिया तत्वों की भ्रष्ट नेताओं एवं अफसरों से गठजोड़ को खत्म करने की भी है। इस गठजोड़ को बयान करने वाली वोहरा कमेटी की धूल खा रही रपट को गृह मंत्रालय की अलमारी से निकालने का यह सही समय है। यह रपट 1993 में सरकार को सौंपी गई थी। आर्थिक क्षेत्र में सक्रिय लॉबियों, तस्कर गिरोहों, माफिया तत्वों के साथ भ्रष्ट नेताओं एवं अफसरों के गठबंधन को तोड़ने के ठोस उपाय भी वोहरा रपट में मौजूद हैं। यह रपट इतनी सनसनीखेज थी कि तत्कालीन सरकार ने उसे सार्वजनिक तक नहीं किया। रपट की तीन प्रतियां ही तैयार की गई थीं। पिछले पांच वर्षों में पहली बार उन माफिया तत्वों के खिलाफ कार्रवाई की शुरुआत हुई जिनकी चर्चा वोहरा रपट में है, लेकिन अभी इन तत्वों पर निर्णायक प्रहार बाकी है। देश के लिए यह अच्छी बात है कि मौजूदा सरकार में उन तत्वों को बचाने वाले संरक्षक नहीं हैं, बल्कि हमले का हौसला रखने वाले अब शीर्ष पर हैं। इन्हीं तत्वों और उनके पिछलग्गुओं ने पिछले पांच साल में मोदी सरकार को तरह-तरह से परेशान किया, परंतु चुनाव में मतदाताओं ने उन्हें और उनके संरक्षकों को परोक्ष रूप से चेतावनी दे दी है। मोदी सरकार को समझना होगा कि माफिया

की जड़ों पर हमला अभी बाकी है। यदि वोहरा समिति की रपट पर कार्रवाई हुई होती तो कुछ बरस पहले चर्चा में आए रांडिया टेप की कहानी के पात्र पहले ही जमींदोज हो चुके होते, मगर नाला है कि अब उस सफाए का श्रेय मोदी-शाह की जोड़ी को मिलना है। गुजरात में ऐसे माफिया तत्वों से भिड़कर उन्हें पराजित करने का अनुभव उनके पास है।

मुंबई में 1993 में हुए भीषण बम विस्फोटों की पृष्ठभूमि में वोहरा कमेटी का तब गठन किया गया था जब वह केंद्रीय गृह सचिव थे। वोहरा समिति की रपट में कहा गया था कि 'इस देश में अपराधी गिरोहों, हथियारबंद गुटों, नशीली दवाओं का व्यापार करने वाले गिरोहों, तस्करो, आर्थिक क्षेत्रों में सक्रिय भ्रष्ट लॉबियों का तेजी से प्रसार हुआ है। इन लोगों ने पिछले कुछ वर्षों के दौरान स्थानीय स्तर पर नौकरशाहों, सरकारी पदों पर आसीन लोगों, नेताओं, मीडिया तथा गैर सरकारी क्षेत्रों के महत्वपूर्ण पदों पर आसीन लोगों के साथ व्यापक संपर्क विकसित कर लिए हैं। इनमें से कुछ सिंडिकेटों की विदेशी खुफिया एजेंसियों के साथ-साथ अन्य अंतरराष्ट्रीय संबंध भी हैं।' वोहरा समिति की रपट को पढ़ने से साफ लगता है कि एनएन वोहरा ने रांडिया टेप मामले का पूर्वाभास पहले ही कर लिया था। शायद वोहरा समिति को इसका भी अभास था कि एक दिन वड़े आर्थिक अपराधियों को देश से भगा देने का रास्ता बड़ी कुर्सियों पर बैठे लोग ही साफ कर देंगे। रपट के अनुसार कुछ प्रदेशों में इन गिरोहों को स्थानीय स्तर पर राजनीतिक दलों के नेताओं

सृजन के संसार की बड़ी क्षति

इस समय में यदि भारत के सर्जनात्मक विकास और उत्कर्ष की विश्वख्याति का परिप्रेक्ष्य देखा जाए तो यह हमारे लिए थोड़ा मुश्किल समय नजर आएगा। मुश्किल इस मामले में कि हमारे बीच से जीनियस का निरंतर प्रवाण हो रहा है। साहित्य से, कला से, रंगमंच से, संगीत से, नृत्य से, सिनेमा से स्थापित मूर्धन्य अलविदा कहते जा रहे हैं। गिरीश कारनाड ऐसे ही एक मूर्धन्य थे। शारीरिक व्याधियों के चलते उन्हें अपने साथ ऑक्सीजन रखनी होती थी, लेकिन यह निश्चता उनकी संज्ञकत्वता का कुछ भी बचाए न पाती थी। वह अध्ययन, मनन, लेखन के साथ-साथ सामाजिक सरोकारों के लिए भी प्रायः घर के बाहर आ जाया करते थे। समकालीन भारतीय कला जगत में चित्रपट कथा लेखक और फिल्म निर्देशक के साथ ही शीर्षस्थ रक्तियों के रूप में स्थापित कारनाड का जन्म 1938 में महाराष्ट्र के माथेरान में एक चिकित्सक परिवार में हुआ था। उनका बचपन बहुत संघर्षपूर्ण था जहां उन्होंने अपने मां को बच्चों के पालन-पोषण के लिए अनेक तकलीफें उठाते देखा था। वह बचपन से ही प्रतिभाशाली थे और अपने सभी भाई-बहनों के संरक्षक भी। 1958 में स्नातक उपाधि प्राप्त करने के दो साल बाद उन्हें शेक्सपि स्कॉलरशिप मिली और वह ऑक्सफोर्ड विश्वविद्यालय गए। वहीं उन्होंने अपना पहला नाटक ययाति लिखा, जिसका मंचन इंग्लैंड में भी हुआ। बाद में वह लगातार नाट्य लेखन में सक्रिय रहे। चेन्नई में स्थापित ऑक्सफोर्ड यूनिवर्सिटी प्रेस में प्रबंधक के रूप में काम करते हुए उन्होंने तुगलक, हयवदन, अंजुमालिंगे, हूमा, हुंजा, नाममंडल, द फायर एंड द रेन नाटकों का लेखन किया। इन नाटकों से उनकी यात्रा का आकलन करें तो वह उसम से उत्कृष्ट होती चली गई। ये सभी कृतियां साहित्यिक मूल्यों से परिपूर्ण और रंगप्रयोगों की दृष्टि से अत्यंत समृद्ध और प्रभावी मानी जाती हैं। कारनाड ने बादल सरकार, मोहन राकेश और विजय तेंदुलकर की सक्रियता के दौर में अपनी सृजनशीलता से समानांतर प्रतिष्ठा और सम्मान अर्जित किया।

हिंदी के विशदघन नाटककार पंडित सत्यदेव दुवे से उनकी गहरी मित्रता है। हयवदन समकालीन भारतीय रंग लेखन की उत्कृष्ट उल्लिख्य के रूप में उनका प्रशंसित नाटक है। कारनाड के लिखे नाटक राष्ट्रीय ही नहीं अंतरराष्ट्रीय प्राप्त मंचों पर भी अनेकों बार प्रदर्शित होकर सराहे गए। वह जलूत-कन्नड़ लेखक थे, किंतु समकालीन सर्जनात्मक विश्व में उनकी एक अखिल भारतीय छवि सर्वमान्य थी। उनके नाटक अनेक विदेशी और भारतीय भाषाओं में अनूदित होकर मंचित हुए। 1984 में जर्मन नाट्य दल द्वारा हयवदन की वायमर नाट्यगृह में प्रस्तुति और बर्लिन आर्ट फेस्टिवल



सुनील मिश्र



कारनाड बौद्धिक-सांस्कृतिक जगत में इस रूप में स्थापित थे जिन्हें सम्मानित करके सम्मान की गरिमा बढ़ जाती थी

में प्रदर्शन तथा 1993 में अमेरिका के मिनिपोलिस में नागमंडल की प्रथम प्रस्तुति के बाद कई देशों में उसके प्रदर्शन उल्लेखनीय हैं। मिथकीय धारणाओं पर आधारित उनके नाटक मनोविश्लेषणात्मक प्रतीक प्रयोगों से परिपूर्ण माने जाते थे। एक रंगकमी के रूप में अपनी समृद्ध पहचान को वह गंभीरतापूर्वक स्वीकारते थे, अपने लिए वह आलोचक थे और बहुरा इसे लेकर लगातार बात भी किया करते थे।

सिनेमा के क्षेत्र में उनके अवदान को तो नकारा जा ही नहीं सकता। अब तक पचास से ज्यादा फिल्मों का उन्होंने निर्माण किया, दस से अधिक वृत्तचित्र बनाए और लगभग इतने ही दूरदर्शन धारावाहिकों का निर्माण भी किया। उनकी सर्वाधिक चर्चित फिल्मों में कांडु का नाम लिया जाता है। संस्कारा उनकी पहली फिल्म थी जिसमें पटकथा लेखन के साथ ही उन्होंने अभिनय भी किया था। वंश वृक्ष, निशांत, मंथन, भूमिका, कलगुग, गोधुलि, उंबरठा, सुबह, स्वामी, चेलुवी आदि उनकी अन्य चर्चित फिल्में थीं। शिशु कपूर के अग्रह पर उन्होंने उत्सव फिल्म का निर्देशन भी किया था जो अपने समय की एक बड़ी प्रयोगधर्मी और क्लासिक फिल्म मानी जाती है। अकीरा कुरोसावा से प्रेरित उनकी एक अत्यंत महत्वपूर्ण फिल्म ऑनोनेडु कलाउल्ली का जिक्र प्रायः होता है। कारनाड भारतीय सिनेमा में ग्रामीणुखी रझान और नवयथार्थवाद के प्रतिनिधि माने जाते हैं। साठ के दशक में नवीन रंग चेतना और सत्तर के दशक में नए सिनेमा के

आंदोलन के प्रेरणादायी सूत्रधारों में उनकी गणना होती है। कारनाड को 1970 में दो वर्ष के लिए रंगकर्म के क्षेत्र में सर्जनात्मक कार्य के लिए होमीभाभा फेलोशिप भी मिली। 1974 में उन्होंने फिल्म एवं टेलीविजन संस्थान पुणे के पहले निदेशक के पद पर कार्य किया। इस दौरान एक दिलचस्प प्रसंग हुआ कि अभिनेता नसीरुद्दीन शाह ने लंबा आंदोलन छेड़खा था जिसमें उनके अनेक साथी कार्यबाधित कर रहे थे। उसी वक्त एक समय जब बनेगल उनसे मिलने आए और निशांत में अभिनय का प्रस्ताव दिया तो उन्होंने श्याम बनेगल से नसीर की बड़ी तारीफ की और प्रेरित किया कि वह उनकी ओर कलगुग की अवसर दें। ऐसे वक्त में जब आपका विद्यार्थी आंदोलनरत हो और आप उसको एक बड़े अवसर से जोड़ने की उदरता और बड़ा हृदय रखें, ऐसे उदाहरण कम ही सामने आते होंगे। यह कारनाड की सदाशयता और समृद्ध दृष्टि का प्रमाण माना जाएगा।

बेनेगल के साथ उन्होंने निशांत के अलावा मंथन फिल्म में भी काम किया और कलगुग की पटकथा भी लिखी। 1976 में वह कर्नाटक राज्य नाटक अकादमी और 1988 से 93 तक केंद्रीय संगीत नाटक अकादमी के अध्यक्ष पद को सुशोभाित करते रहे। इसी दौरान उन्हें दो वर्ष के लिए शिकागो विश्वविद्यालय में विजिटिंग प्रोफेसर और फुलब्राइट स्कॉलर इन रेसीडेंस के रूप में भी काम करने का अवसर प्राप्त हुआ। उन्हें अनेक प्रतिष्ठित सम्मान प्राप्त हुए जिनमें 1971 में संगीत नाटक अकादमी, कमला देवी चट्टोपाध्याय पुरस्कार, पद्मश्री, पद्मविभूषण शामिल हैं। उनकी पहली फिल्म संस्कारा राष्ट्रपति के स्वर्ण पदक से पुरस्कृत नेशनल अवार्ड प्राप्त फिल्म है। 1994 में उन्हें कर्नाटक विवि ने डॉक्टर ऑफ लिटरेचर की मानद उपाधि से सम्मानित किया। 1998 में वह रंगकर्म के क्षेत्र में राष्ट्रीय कालिदास सम्मान से विभूषित हुए। इसी वर्ष भारतीय ज्ञानपीठ ने भी उन्हें सम्मानित किया। वह भारतीय ज्ञान परंपरा और हमारी अनंत दार्शनिक परिकल्पनाओं की उत्कृष्टता के चेहरे के रूप में हमारे बीच रहे। अपनी जीवटता के साथ उनका हमारे बीच होना हमें एक प्रकार की ऑक्सीजन देता था। उनके व्यक्तित्व में असाधारण गरिमा थी। वह रंगमंच से आधुनिक कलाओं के संसार में अपने आपको बहुत सहज और समरस पाते थे। वह बौद्धिक और सांस्कृतिक जगत में ऐसे व्यक्ति थे जिन्हें सम्मानित करके सम्मान की गरिमा बढ़ जाती थी। उनका अवसान बौद्धिक-सांस्कृतिक समाज की अपूर्णीय क्षति है।

(लेखक सिनेमा पर सर्वोत्तम लेखन के लिए नेशनल अवार्ड से पुरस्कृत है)

response@jagran.com



अवधेश राजगुप्त

और सरकारी पदों पर आसीन व्यक्तियों का संरक्षण हासिल है। कुछ नेता इन गिरोहों के नेता बन जाते हैं और कुछ ही वर्षों में स्थानीय निकायों, विधानसभाओं और संसद के लिए निर्वाचित हो जाते हैं। परिणामस्वरूप वे राजनीतिक प्रभाव प्राप्त कर लेते हैं और उसके कारण प्रशासन को सुचारु रूप से चलाने और आम आदमी के जानमाल की हिफाजत करने की दिशा में बाधा उत्पन्न होती है।

1993 और 2019 के बीच जितना भी सकारात्मक अंतर आया है उसके लिए शासन को धन्यवाद, किंतु जितना नहीं आया है उसके लिए कौन-कौन लोग जिम्मेदार हैं? महत्वपूर्ण अफसरों के साथ -साथ सीबीआइ और आइबी निदेशक भी उच्चस्तरीय वोहरा समिति के सदस्य थे। वोहरा समिति ने यह भी कहा था, 'तस्करो के बड़े-बड़े सिंडिकेट देश के भीतर छा गए हैं और उन्होंने हवाला लेन-देन, काले धन की जमाखोरी सहित विभिन्न आर्थिक क्रियाकलापों को प्रदूषित कर दिया है। उनके द्वारा भ्रष्ट समांतर अर्थव्यवस्था चलाए जाने के कारण देश की

आर्थिक संरचना को गंभीर क्षति पहुंची है। इन सिंडिकेटों ने सरकारी तंत्र को सभी स्तरों पर सफलतापूर्वक भ्रष्ट किया हुआ है। इन तत्वों ने जांच-पड़ताल और अभियोजन अभिकरणों को इस तरह प्रभावित किया हुआ है कि उन्हें अपने कार्य संचालन में तमाम कठिनाइयों का सामना करना पड़ रहा है।'

रपट में यह भी लिखा था, 'कुछ माफिया तत्व नारकोटिक्स, ड्रग्स और हथियारों की तस्करी में संलिप्त हैं और उन्होंने विशेषकर जम्मू-कश्मीर, पंजाब, गुजरात और महाराष्ट्र जैसे राज्यों में अपना एक नारको-आतंक तंत्र बना लिया है। चुनाव लड़ने जैसे कार्यों में खर्च की जाने वाली राशि के चलते नेता भी इन तत्वों के चंगुल में आ गए हैं। रोकथाम और खोजी तंत्र से इन माफिया तत्वों ने गंभीर संबंध बना लिया है। वह वायसस देश के लगभग सभी केंद्रों में तटवर्ती स्थानों पर फैल गया है।' सीमावर्ती क्षेत्र इससे विशेष रूप से पीड़ित हैं। समिति की बैठक में आइबी के निदेशक ने साफ-साफ कहा था कि माफिया तंत्र ने वास्तव में एक समानांतर सरकार चलाकर

राज्य तंत्र को एक विस्मृति में धकेल दिया है। इसलिए यह अत्यंत आवश्यक है कि ऐसे संकट से प्रभावी रूप से निपटने के लिए एक संस्थान स्थापित किया जाए।'

देश को गर्त में जाने से बचाने के लिए पिछले 26 साल में इस दिशा में भरपूर प्रयास हुए होते तो आज रिश्थित कुछ अलग होती। इस बीच इस देश के संसाधनों को लूटने वालों ने अपनी कार्यशैली और रणनीति में भी समय के साथ बदलाव कर लिया है। वोहरा समिति ने ऐसे सफ्ट्विग्रेडी तत्वों को सजा दिलाने का प्रबंध करने की भी सलाह दी थी, पर उन्हें नजरअंदाज कर दिया गया। वोहरा समिति ने यह सलाह दी थी कि गृह मंत्रालय के तहत एलफा एजेंसी तैयार हो जो देश में किसी भी संदिग्ध गतिविधि की सूचना एकत्र करे। इसमें ऐसी व्यवस्था की जाए ताकि सूचनाएं लीक नहीं हों, क्योंकि सूचनाएं लीक होने से राजनीतिक दबाव पड़ने लगता है और ताकतवर लोगों के खिलाफ कार्रवाई खतरे में पड़ जाती है। यह सुनिश्चित किया जाना चाहिए कि नोडल एजेंसी पर किसी तरह का फलक न पड़े और वह सूचनाओं को लेकर मामले को तार्किक परिणति तक पहुंचा सके।

वोहरा समिति ने अपनी रपट में बार-बार इसका उल्लेख किया कि राजनीतिक संरक्षण से ही देश में तरह-तरह के गलत धंधे फल-फूल रहे हैं। रपट के अनुसार, 'यह कहने की आवश्यकता नहीं कि अपराधिक सिंडिकेटों के राज्यों और केंद्र के वरिष्ठ सरकारी अफसरों या नेताओं के साथ साठगांठ के बारे में सूचना के किसी प्रकार के लीकेज का सरकारी कामकाज पर अस्थिर प्रभाव हो सकता है।' क्या ऐसी कारगर नोडल एजेंसी अब भी नहीं बन सकती? क्या अब भी माफिया-नेता-अफसर गठजोड़ को तोड़ा नहीं जा सकता? क्यों नहीं? मोदी हैं तो यह भी मुमकिन है।

(लेखक राजनीतिक विश्लेषक एवं वरिष्ठ स्तंभकार हैं)

response@jagran.com



जीवन और दर्द

तेज तूफान और मनघोर बारिश के बाद आकाश साफ हो चुका था और सूर्य अपनी पूर्ण प्रखरता के साथ सफेद बादलों की ओट से निकल कर धरती पर रोशनी बिखेर रहा था। कुछ लहलहे के पश्चात सुंदर तोरण सरीखे सतरंगी इंद्रधनुष की मनमोहक छटा नीले फलक पर अपनी खूबसूरती बिखेर रही थी। इन मनमोहक दृश्यों पर सजीदगी से सोचें तो मन में एक प्रश्न बार-बार कौंध उठता है कि इस कायनात में कुदरती घटनाओं के रूप में वर्षा और इंद्रधनुह के अंतर्निहित अर्थ क्या है? और उससे भी अधिक अहम प्रश्न यह है कि ये दोनों घटनाएं मानव जीवन को बेहतर ढंग से जीने के लिए किन्न प्रकार प्रेरित करती हैं? सूक्ष्मात से विचार करें तो यह समझते देर नहीं लगती है कि इस प्रसंग में वर्षा प्रतीक है रुदन का, आंसू का, दर्द का, त्याग का, वेदना का, समस्याओं का और उन समस्या संझावातों का जो मानव जीवन में अनवरत रूप में चलते रहते हैं। इंद्रधनुष में मानव मन की खुशियां प्रतिबिंबित हो उठती हैं, लेकिन यहां पर एक कालजयी सत्य जो हमारे सामने मुखर हो उठता है वह यह है कि जीवन में इंद्रधनुष रूपी खुशियां सामान्य घटना नहीं हैं, क्योंकि हर एक बारिश इंद्रधनुष की छटा के साथ समापत नहीं होती है, लेकिन मानव जीवन में दुख एक स्वाभाविक और सामान्य घटना है। यह संसार का नियम है।

महान ब्रिटिश साम्राज्यकार थॉमस हार्डी ने एक बार कहा था, दर्द के उपायना नाटक में खुशियां कभी-कभार आने वाली घटना है। अर्थात जीवन दर्द है, दुःख का पर्याय है, लेकिन मानव मन जीवन के इस विज्ञान को समझ नहीं पाता और और दुःख से रिज जाने पर हल्लाक हो उठता है। उसे लगता है कि गोया उसके लिए इस दुनिया का अंत हो गया हो। उसे अपने सारे सपने बिखरे हुए प्रतीत होते हैं, लेकिन जीवन में दुख के आने पर इस तरह दुखी हो जाने और जीवन तथा जहन्न से हार मान लेने पर दर्द और तीव्र हो जाता है। मन में विश्वास रखते हुए और साहस के साथ यदि जीवन की समस्याओं का सामना किया जाए तो जीवन की खुशियां वापस लौट आती हैं और किसी तूफान के गुजर जाने के बाद की शांति और सुख की प्राप्ति होती है। इससे जीवन के दुःख-दर्दों का भी कुशलता के साथ सामना करने की क्षमता विकसित होती है।

श्रीप्रकाश शर्मा

मेलबाक्स

नीट में विसंगतियां

एमबीबीएस की प्रवेश परीक्षा (नीट) में कुछ विसंगतियां हैं। परीक्षा से ऐसा लगता है कि प्रतिभाशाली छात्र ही इसमें प्रवेश पाएंगे, लेकिन ऐसा होता नहीं है। इसमें जो प्रक्रिया अपनाई जाती है, उसमें कम अंक वाले भी एमबीबीएस कर सकते हैं और करते भी हैं। बस फर्क यही है कि कम अंक वालों को निजी कालेजों में अच्छा डोनेशन देना होता है, लेकिन पढ़ने के बाद तो सब डाक्टर ही होते हैं और कहीं भी नौकरी आदि में सामान हँसियार रहते हैं। इस बार करीब 14 लाख बच्चों ने नीट की परीक्षा दी और लगभग 8 लाख परीक्षार्थियों को नीट ने पास घोषित किया है। 720 अंक में से 107 प्राप्त करने वाले भी पास हैं। 702 अंक वाला टॉपर और जिसने 107 अंकों में पास है वह भी एमबीबीएस कर सकता है। देश में वर्तमान में लगभग एमबीबीएस की 65 हजार सीटें हैं। निजी कालेज वाले डोनेशन लेकर लेकर सबसे कम अंक वाले को भी दाखिला दे देते हैं, लेकिन कहा जाता है कि प्रतिभा की पूछ होती है। क्या यही प्रतिभा है? जब कम अंक वाले का दाखिला नहीं हो सकता, इसीलिए परीक्षा का आयोजन किया जाता है। लेकिन कम अंक वाला डोनेशन देकर एमबीबीएस कर लेता है और पैसे के बल पर वह विशेषज्ञ भी बन जाता है। सरकारी अथवा निजी अस्पताल में मरीजों का इलाज भी करता है। एमबीबीएस की पढ़ाई के नाम पर देश में ही रही लूट रोकने के लिए नीट को चाहिए कि कुल एमबीबीएस की सीटों का तीन गुना से अधिक पास न करे। इस तरह प्रतिभाशाली बच्चे ही डॉक्टर बनेंगे।

प्रेमपाल सिंह, मोहन नगर, पलवल हरियाणा

सस्ता कर्ज

एक जमाने में कर्ज में ढ़्बा व्यक्ति खुशहाली से महरूम, समाज की नजरों में गिरा हुआ इंसान होता था। आज खुशहाली की खातिर कर्ज के हैंज में डुबकी लगाने को हर कोई बेताब है। कर्ज की बलुलत रोटी, कपड़े, मकान के दिन भी बुलंदी पर हैं। तभी तो रिजर्व बैंक के ताजा सस्ते कर्ज का एलान हर तबके को ईंद का तोहफा दे गया है। डर है कि कर्ज की ज्यादा खुराक सेहत के लिए हानिकारक न हो जाए।

mkmishra75@yahoo.in

आरक्षण पर नया विमर्श

लोजपा नेता चिराम पासवान ने कहा कि जिस तरह समुद्र लोगों ने गैस सब्सिडी छोड़ी है उसी तरह संपन्न दलित भी अपनी मर्जी से आरक्षण छोड़ दें ताकि गरीब दलितों को ज्यादा फायदा मिल सके। इस पर राष्ट्रीय स्तर पर विचार किया जाना चाहिए। आरक्षण पर संपन्न दलित वक्ता गेंगियल लें और अपने ही परीब लोगों को लाभ पहुंचाकर उनका उत्थान करें।

mahesh.nenava@yahoo.com

इस संबंध में किसी भी विषय पर राय व्यक्त करने अथवा दैनिक जागरण के राष्ट्रीय संस्करण पर प्रतिक्रिया व्यक्त करने के लिए पाठकगण सादर आमंत्रित हैं। आप हमें पत्र भेजने के साथ ई-मेल भी कर सकते हैं।

अपने पत्र इस पते पर भेजें :
 दैनिक जागरण, राष्ट्रीय संस्करण,
 डी-210-211, सेक्टर-63, नोएडा
 ई-मेल : mailbox@jagran.com

प्लास्टिक का कहर

केंद्रीय प्रदूषण नियंत्रण बोर्ड के आकलन के मुताबिक, साल 2017-18 में भारत में 6.6 लाख टन से अधिक प्लास्टिक कचरा पैदा हुआ था. लेकिन यह पूरी तस्वीर नहीं है. देश के 35 क्षेत्रीय प्रदूषण नियंत्रण बोर्डों में से सिर्फ 14 ने ही ऐसे कचरे के बारे में जानकारी दी थी. वर्ष 2016-17 में केवल 25 बोर्डों ने केंद्रीय बोर्ड को जानकारी दी थी. विवश होकर बोर्ड को राष्ट्रीय हरित ट्रिब्यूनल की शरण लेनी पड़ी थी. ट्रिब्यूनल ने इस वर्ष 30 अप्रैल तक सभी क्षेत्रीय केंद्रों से जानकारी देने का निर्देश दिया था. परंतु, लापरवाही का आलम यह है कि आंध्र प्रदेश, सिक्किम, पश्चिम बंगाल और पुदुचेरी के अलावा किसी भी अन्य राज्य ने रिपोर्ट नहीं दिया है. अब इन 25 राज्यों को हर महीने एक करोड़ रुपये का अर्थदंड देना पड़ सकता है. जिस देश में 1.65 करोड़ टन प्लास्टिक की सालाना खपत होती हो, इसमें 43 फीसदी का इस्तेमाल सिर्फ एक बार होता हो, कुल उत्पादन का 80 फीसदी कचरे में फेंक दिया जाता हो तथा कचरे का 40 फीसदी से ज्यादा हिस्सा जमा भी नहीं होता हो, वहां इस

प्लास्टिक के नुकसान पर चर्चाओं और जागरूकता अभियानों के बावजूद हमारे देश में इसके उपभोग में कमी के संकेत नहीं हैं, बल्कि इसमें बढ़ोतरी ही हो रही है.

किसी भी शहर में टोले बनते कचरे के ढेर में प्लास्टिक की बहुतायत देख सकते हैं. महानगरों में तो कचरे के बड़े-बड़े पहाड़ बनने लगे हैं. गलियों, सड़कों, नालियों और नदियों में भी ऐसा कचरा पसरे देख सकते हैं. समुद्र में तो इतना प्लास्टिक जमा हो चुका है कि उसकी सफाई करना असंभव हो चुका है. भारी खर्च और श्रम के कारण समुद्री तटों को भी साफ नहीं रखा जा सकता है. एक आकलन के मुताबिक, 2050 तक समुद्र में प्लास्टिक की मात्रा तमाम मछलियों के कुल वजन से ज्यादा हो जायेगी. ऐसे में यह दुर्भाग्य ही है कि न तो देश के स्तर पर और न ही अंतरराष्ट्रीय समुदाय की ओर से इस संकट से जूझने की कोई ठोस पहलकदमी हो रही है. हाल में इस मुद्दे पर हुए संयुक्त राष्ट्र की बैठक में कोई वैश्विक सहमति नहीं बन पायी. प्लास्टिक के नुकसान पर चर्चाओं और जागरूकता अभियानों के बावजूद हमारे देश में इसके उपभोग में कमी के संकेत नहीं हैं, बल्कि इसमें बढ़ोतरी ही हो रही है. औद्योगिक रिपोर्टों के अनुसार, 2015 में इसका कुल उत्पादन 1.34 करोड़ टन हुआ था, जिसके 2020 में 2.20 करोड़ टन होने का अनुमान है. इसमें लाभभग आधा एक बार इस्तेमाल होनेवाला प्लास्टिक होगा. आवश्यकता है कि पर्यावरण संरक्षण के प्रयासों में प्लास्टिक पर नियंत्रण को प्राथमिकता दी जाये.



बोधि वृक्ष

विश्वात्मा

विश्वात्मा- विश्व संसार है, आत्मा चेतना है. विश्वात्मा शाश्वत चेतना है. क्या तुम अपने जीवन के बारे में जानते हो? तुम तो यह भी नहीं जानते कि तुम कौन हो? तुम अपनी नींद या स्वप्नों के बारे में नहीं जानते-स्वप्न क्यों आते हैं, हम नहीं जानते. अहंकार तब आता है जब तुम सोचते हो कि तुम कुछ जानते हो. तुम निर्हकारी (अहंकार से मुक्त) हो सकते हो, जब तुम्हारा मन शांत होता है और तुम जानते हो कि तुम कुछ नहीं जानते. जब तुम मंदिर जाते हो, तुम नहीं जानते कि पुजारी क्या कर रहा है या कौन सा मंत्र पढ़ रहा है, पर तुम्हें विश्वास होता है कि कुछ भला ही होगा. पुराणों में एक कथा है. ब्रह्मा (निर्माता) और विष्णु (पालनकर्ता) ने शिव (संहरक) के बारे में जानना चाहा. शिव आदि या अंत से परे अनंत हैं. तो ब्रह्मा, शिव के सिर और विष्णु, उनके पैरों की खोज के लिए चल पड़े. वे युगों तक चलते रहे, पर शिव के आदि या अंत में से किसी का पता नहीं लगा सके. उन्होंने वापस लौटने का निर्णय लिया. अपने लौटने के मार्ग पर ब्रह्मा ने एक केतकी का फूल गिराते हुए देखा और उससे पूछा कि वह कहां से आ रहा है. फूल ने कहा कि वह शिव के सिर का शृंगार था. ब्रह्मा ने सोच लिया कि उन्होंने शिव के पैरों को देख लिया और यही विष्णु को बता दिया. विष्णु ने कहा कि वह शिव के पैरों को नहीं पा सके. यह ब्रह्मांड अनंत विस्तार है. इस अनंत ब्रह्मांड में व्याप्त चेतना भी अनंत और अज्ञेय है. यह केवल प्रेम करने योग्य है. ईश्वर को जानने की चेष्टा न करो. ईश्वर, जिसे जाना नहीं जा सकता, उससे बस प्रेम करो. यही श्रद्धा है. जब तुम ध्यान करते हो और अन्य लोगों के इतने अच्छे अनुभवों के बारे में सुनते हो, तो तुम सोचने लगते हो कि मेरी क्या स्थिति है? इस बात में मत फंसा. यह जानो कि ईश्वर के जाने का नहीं जा सकता. मैं कुछ नहीं जानता- यह ध्यान का मूल है. पर इसका फलत प्रयोग मत करो. यदि कोई तुमसे पूछता है कि तुम कहां से आ रहे हो या क्या समय है, तो यह मत कहो कि मैं नहीं जानता. यह ठीक नहीं है. जब तुम ध्यान में बैठो, तब इसका उपयोग करो.

श्रीश्री रविवंकर

दुर्लभ संस्कृतिकर्मियों में से थे नाटककार और अभिनेता गिरीश कर्नाड

गिरीश कर्नाड ने जब अपना पहला नाटक ययाति (1961) लिखा, तो आयु मात्र 23 साल की थी और तुगलक (1964) के प्रकाशन के साथ ही वे राष्ट्रीय रंगमंच के केंद्र में आ गये थे. प्रकाशन के साथ ही तुगलक का कन्नड़, मराठी और हिंदी में मंचन हुआ. इब्राहिम अल्काजी ने 1967 में इसे राष्ट्रीय नाट्य विद्यालय के लिए प्रस्तुत किया. सुरेश अवस्थी, पुरुषोत्तम लक्ष्मण देशपांडे और इब्राहिम अल्काजी के संपादन में ‘आज के रंग नाटक’ (1973) के नाम से चार नाटकों का प्रकाशन हुआ, जिसमें मोहन राकेश, विजय तेंदुलकर, बादल सकार के साथ गिरीश कर्नाड के नाटकों को भी रखा गया. यह भारतीय नाटककारों का एक चतुर्भुज था, जिसकी आखिरी भुजा का देहवसान हो गया. आजादी के बाद भारतीय रंगमंच में जिस राष्ट्रीय रंगमंच की खोज हो रही थी, उसे इन नाटकों ने एक रास्ता पक़्काया था. सत्तर के दशक में जब भारतीय रंगमंच को लगा कि पश्चात्य रंगमंच से प्रभावित नाट्य युक्तियों में कुछ अधिक बंधन हैं, तो खुलेपन और भारतीय रंग मुहारे की तलाश नाटककारों को परंपराशील रंगमंच की युक्तियों तक ले गयीं, उस समय यी गिरीश कर्नाड ने हयवदन (1971) लिखकर रास्ता दिखाया, जिसमें कर्नाटक की शैली यक्षगान और भाववत भेला की युक्तियों का समावेश था, इसके बाद ‘थियेटर ऑफ रूट्स’ के नारे ने जोर पक़ड़ा.

नाटककार के रूप में गिरीश कर्नाड लगभग छह दशकों तक सक्रिय रहे. महाभारत की कथाओं पर आधारित नाटक ‘ययाति’ और ‘अग्निवर्षा’ लिखा. इतिहास के माध्यम से भी वो वर्तमान को टटोलते हैं. ‘तुगलक’ में एक सुल्तान की अपनी महत्वाकांक्षा

का द्वंद्व है, जिसका असर उसकी रियाया पर होता है. ‘रक्त कल्याण’ में बसवण्णा के चरित्र के माध्यम से धर्म और धार्मिक समुदाय के भीतर चल रहे संघर्ष का विवरण है. उनका अंतिम प्रकाशित नाटक ‘राक्षसा तंग्गाडी’ भी तालीकोटा के युद्ध पर आधारित है. सीधे-सीधे समसामयिक जीवन को भी विषय बनाते हैं. ‘बेंडा कालू ऑन रोड’ नाटक महानगर के रूप में पसरते शहरों की गाथा है, जिसमें कई तरह की संस्कृतियां शहर के अलग-अलग छोरों पर रहती हैं, जिसके आपसी मेल से शहर बनता है, लेकिन ये एक-दूसरे से अनजान बने रहते हैं. कार्मोपोलिटन का दावा करनेवाले शहरों की संकीर्णता कैसी है, इसको सूक्ष्मता से नाटक में बुना गया है. स्त्री उनके नाट्य लेखन के केंद्र में रही है, चाहे स्त्री किरदार हों ‘अग्निवर्षा’ की विशाखा जैसी या स्त्री किरदार को आधार बनाकर लिखा गया नाटक ‘बिखरे बिंब’ हो, जो एक औसत लेखिका के छल के आधार पर बड़ा



अभिनेता

रंगकर्म्म समीक्षक
amitesho@gmail.com

गिरीश कर्नाड

19 मई, 1938 - 10 जून, 2019

अभिनेता के तौर पर एक तरफ ‘निशांत’ जैसे समानांतर फिल्मों में काम किया, तो ‘एक था टाइटन’ जैसी मुख्यधारा के सिनेमा में भी.

संपादकीय प्रभात

संबंधों को विश्वास का ठोस आधार

प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी का दूसरी बार पद ग्रहण करने के बाद पहली एवं दूसरी विदेश यात्रा के लिए मालदीव और श्रीलंका के चयन का विशेष महत्व है. मोदी ने इसके द्वारा संदेश दिया कि ‘पड़ोसी प्रथम’ नीति केवल सिद्धांत नहीं भारत के आचरण में निहित है. श्रीलंका यात्रा वहां की सरकार, सुरक्षा एजेंसियां, नागरिकों एवं वहां रह रहे भारतीयों के साथ एकता दर्शाने एवं उनके बीच आत्मविश्वास पैदा करने के लिए था. आतंकवादी हमले के बाद वहां पहुंचनेवाले वे पहले विदेशी नेता बने. श्रीलंका ने इस नाते उनका स्वागत किया. इससे पर्यटकों के आने का सिलसिला आरंभ होगा तथा उसकी अर्थव्यवस्था को भी गति मिलेगी. मोदी हवाई अड्डे पर उतरते ही प्रधानमंत्री रानिल विक्रमसिंघे के साथ कोलंबो स्थित सेंट एंथनी चर्च पहुंचे, जहां इंस्टर हमले में मारे गये लोगों को श्रद्धांजलि दी और ईसाई नेताओं से मुलाकात की. इसका संदेश साफ था. उसके बाद राष्ट्रपति मैत्रिपाला सिरिसेना के साथ सारे विषयों पर अनीपचारिक चर्चा की. इस दौरान श्रीलंका सरकार की कैबिनेट के सहयोगी, सभी नौ राज्यों के मुख्यमंत्री और अन्य गणमान्य व्यक्ति उपस्थित थे. वह दृश्य अद्भुत था, जब स्वागत समारोह के दौरान अचानक बारिश हुई तो खुद राष्ट्रपति सिरिसेना नरेंद्र मोदी के सिर पर छाता तानकर चलने लगे. फिर इंडिया हाउस में पूर्व राष्ट्रपति महिंद्रा राजपक्षे और तमिल नेशनल अलायंस के अन्य नेताओं से मुलाकात कर मोदी ने न केवल भारत की सभी दलों के साथ समान व्यवहार की नीति का परिचय दिया, बल्कि आतंकवाद के विरुद्ध श्रीलंकाई एकता को मजबूत करने की भी भूमिका निभायी. कठिन समय में श्रीलंका के लिए यह बहुत बड़ा सहयोग था, जिसका सकारात्मक असर आनेवाले लंबे समय तक दोनों देशों के रिश्तों पर रहेगा.

इसके समानांतर मालदीव की यात्रा औपचारिक द्विपक्षीय श्रेणी की थी. हालांकि, मोदी पिछले वर्ष नवंबर

में वहां के राष्ट्रपति इब्राहिम मोहम्मद सोलिह के शपथग्रहण समारोह में गये थे, लेकिन वह पूर्ण द्विपक्षीय यात्रा नहीं थी. पहले कार्यकाल में दक्षिण एशिया में एकमात्र देश मालदीव ही था, जहां वे चाहकर भी द्विपक्षीय यात्रा नहीं कर पाये थे. राष्ट्रपति इब्राहिम मोहम्मद सोलिह पद संभालने के बाद पहली विदेश यात्रा के रूप में दिसंबर में भारत आये और उस समय हुए समझौतों से गाड़ी पटरी पर लौट आयी. मालदीव की सबसे बड़ी समस्या अब्दुल्ला यामीन द्वारा इन्फ्रास्ट्रक्चर परियोजनाओं के नाम पर चीन से लाखों डॉलर का कर्ज लेना था, जिससे देश चीन के कर्ज जाल में फंस गया. सोलिह की यात्रा के दौरान करीब तीन अरब डॉलर के चीनी कर्ज में फंसे मालदीव को 1.4 अरब डॉलर की वित्तीय मदद की घोषणा सहित कई समझौते किये गये. प्रधानमंत्री मोदी की यात्रा के साथ दोनों देशों ने अपने आर्थिक, सामरिक, सांस्कृतिक और राजनैतिक संबंधों को उससे काफी आगे ले जाकर और सशक्त किया है.

प्रधानमंत्री मोदी अपने हर कार्यक्रम को भावनाओं और दोनों देशों की परस्पर एकता दर्शानेवाली सभ्यता-संस्कृति के साथ आबद्ध करके उसे विशेष स्वरूप दे देते हैं. इब्राहिम सोलिह के साथ द्विपक्षीय बातचीत आरंभ करने के पहले उन्होंने उन्हें भारतीय क्रिकेट टीम के सदस्यों के हस्ताक्षर



अवधेश कुमार

वरिष्ठ पत्रकार
awadeshnkum@gmail.com

श्रीलंका की कुछ घंटे तथा मालदीव की एक दिवसीय यात्रा के फलितार्थ व्यापक हैं. मालदीव का कार्यक्रम भले व्यस्त था, लेकिन इसके पीछे की जबरदस्त तैयारी में बहुआयामी संबंधों को ठोस आधार देने की झलक साफ थी .

करने के लिए तकनीकी समझौते पर भी हस्ताक्षर किये. व्हाइट शिपिंग समझौते के तहत दो देश एक-दूसरे के समुद्री क्षेत्र में वाणिज्यिक जहाजों के बारे में दोनों देशों की नौसेना के बीच सूचना का आदान-प्रदान करते हैं.

कितनी होती है. इसे एक संदर्भ में रखकर देखें, तो इससे भारत के स्वास्थ्य और शिक्षा बजट की भरपाई हो सकती है. यह राशि प्रेमजी के जीवनभर के कार्मों का प्रतिनिधित्व करती है. उन्होंने 21 वर्ष की उम्र में तेल बनानेवाली एक छोटी कंपनी विप्रो की कमान संभाली थी. उन्होंने दशकों तक इसका विस्तार किया, विशेष रूप से सूचना प्रौद्योगिकी के क्षेत्र में. यहीं से उन्होंने ज्यादातर संपत्ति अर्जित की. प्रेमजी जब धन कमा रहे थे, तभी उन्होंने इसे दान देना और न्यास बनाना शुरू कर दिया था. इससे यह सुनिश्चित हुआ कि अनुभवी पेशेवरों के हाथ में उनके पैसे का नियंत्रण था और वे प्रेमजी की तरफ से दान करते थे. यह प्रेमजी को असाधारण बनाता है, खासकर भारत में, हमारे धनिकों को वैभव पसंद है, जैसे- महलनुमा मकान, नौकाएँ, निजी जेट और चित्ताकण्ठक कारों का बेड़ा आदि. हम जैसे मध्य वर्ग के बाकी लोग इस तमाशे का बस आनंद लेते हैं और हम इसे पेज जी संस्कृति कहते हैं.

विश्व के धनाढ्य लोगों में से एक होने के बावजूद अजीम प्रेमजी ने बेहद सादगी के साथ अपना जीवन जिया है. उनकी यह सादगी तब भी दिखी थी, जब उन्होंने अपने पद को छोड़ने की घोषणा करते हुए विप्रो कर्मचारियों को एक पत्र लिखा. शुरुआत से लेकर पत्र का अधिकांश हिस्सा नये अध्यक्ष और नये प्रबंध निदेशक का परिचय देने के लिए समर्पित है. इस पत्र में उन्होंने अपना जिक्र एकदम अंत में किया है और खुद के बारे में अपने स्वभाव के अनुसार बहुत कम लिखा है. इस पत्र में उनकी अपनी उपलब्धियों का कोई उल्लेख नहीं है. मैं इस तरह के दूसरे किसी त्यागपत्र के बारे में नहीं जानता हूं, विशेषकर किसी ऐसे व्यक्ति का, जिसके नाम के साथ ऐसी उपलब्धियां जुड़ी हुई हैं.

एक भारतीय के रूप में हमारे पास व्यक्तिगत व्यवहार के आदर्श के रूप में बहुत कम प्रेरणास्रोत हैं. हम दिखावटी और करिश्माई व्यक्तियों को पसंद करते हैं, जिनके आचार-व्यवहार फिल्मी सितारों की तरह होते हैं.

हमें इस बात को अवश्य रेखांकित करना चाहिए कि आज के ऐसे माहौल में एक अरबपति ने ऐसा काम किया है, जो आज तक किसी ने नहीं किया है तथा उन्होंने ऐसा पूरी विनम्रता और सम्मान के साथ किया है. आधुनिक युग में कुछ ही चीजें मुझे गुजरती होने पर गर्व महसूस कराती हैं. लेकिन प्रेमजी का जीवन निश्चित तौर पर उनमें से एक है. हम सभी इसे एक उदाहरण के रूप में देख सकते हैं और कह सकते हैं: ‘यही वह है, जिसके लिए मनुष्य सक्षम है.’

गिरीश कर्नाड का जन्म 1938 में माथेरान, महाराष्ट्र में हुआ. वे रोड्स स्कॉलर भी थे, ऑक्सफोर्ड यूनिवर्सिटी पढ़ने भी गये और ऑक्सफोर्ड यूनिवर्सिटी प्रेस में नौकरी भी की. साल 1970 में भाषा फेलोशिप मिली और उसके बाद नाटक, रंगमंच और सिनेमा की दुनिया में रम गये. गिरीश उन दुर्लभ संस्कृतिकर्मियों में से एक थे, जिनके सरोकार की अभिव्यक्ति केवल उनकी रचनाओं में ही नहीं रचना से बाहर सार्वजनिक जीवन में भी होती रही, इसमें उम्र और बीमारी की भी उन्होंने दूर धकेल दिया और सड़क पर उतरे. गौरी लंकेश की हत्या के बाद उनके हाथों की ‘मी टू अर्बन नक्सल’ की तख्ती कींथती रहती है. गिरीश नेहरूविद्यन आधुनिकता की दौर की उपज थे. लोकतंत्र, धर्मनिरपेक्षता और अभिव्यक्ति की स्वतंत्रता उनके जीवन के मूल्य थे. अंग्रेजी के विद्वान थे, कन्नड़ में लिखते थे, अपने नाटकों का अंग्रेजी में अनुवाद भी किया और हिंदी समेत अनेक भाषाओं में काम किया. कर्नाड कला के विभिन्न माध्यमों से सहज तालमेल स्थापित करते हैं. उनके शिल्प में राजनीति का गहरा समावेश है, जिसका स्वर अक्सर प्रतिरोध का है.

राष्ट्रपति सोलिह ने मोदी को विदेशी हस्तियों को दिया जानेवाला सबसे बड़ा सम्मान ‘द मोस्ट ऑनरेबल ऑर्डर ऑफ द डिस्टिन्विश क्लॉ ऑफ निशान इंजुद्दीन’ से सम्मानित करके भारत के प्रति सम्मान तथा दोस्ती के प्रति ईमानदार भावना का परिचय दिया. मोदी ने कहा कि मालदीव की हरसंभव सहायता करने के लिए भारत हमेशा प्रतिबद्ध है. संसद से पूरे मालदीव की मोदी ने संदेश दिया कि भारत की विकास साझेदारी लोगों को सशक्त करने के लिए है, उन्हें कमजोर करने, खुद पर निर्भरता बढ़ाने या भावी पीढ़ियों पर कर्ज का बोझ लादने के लिए नहीं है. यह एक और चीन की कुटिल नीति की ओर लक्षित था, जिसने भारी कर्ज देकर संकट में फंसा दिया, वहीं दूसरी ओर भारत की मित्र देश की निःस्वार्थ सहायता का ऐलान. मोदी ने कहा कि मालदीव की भाषा दिबेही और भारतीय भाषाओं में व्यापक समानता हमारे एक होने का प्रमाण है. इसलिए मालदीव में मालदीव राष्ट्रीय रक्षा बल की समग्र प्रशिक्षण संस्थान और भारत द्वारा निर्मित तटीय निगरानी रडार प्रणाली का उद्घाटन किया. यह रडार प्रणाली काफी महत्व रखता है, क्योंकि चीन हिंद महासागर में अपनी समुद्री रेशम मार्ग परियोजना के लिए मालदीव को महत्वपूर्ण मानता है. तटीय निगरानी रडार, एकीकृत तटीय निगरानी प्रणाली के लिए प्राथमिक सेंसर है. दोनों देशों ने भारतीय नौसेना और मालदीव राष्ट्रीय रक्षा बल के बीच व्हाइट शिपिंग सूचनाएं साझा

है. इसलिए मालदीव की सांस्कृतिक धरोहर के संवर्धन, दिबेही के शब्दकोष के विकास जैसी परियोजनाओं में मालदीव को सहयोग देना भारत के लिए महत्वपूर्ण है. मोदी की एक बड़ी घोषणा मृंगा से बनी दुनिया की अकेली फ्राइडे मस्जिद के संरक्षण में भारत के सहयोग संबंधी थी. श्रीलंका की कुछ घंटे तथा मालदीव की एक दिवसीय यात्रा के फलितार्थ व्यापक हैं. मालदीव का कार्यक्रम भले व्यस्त था, लेकिन इसके पीछे की जबरदस्त तैयारी में बहुआयामी संबंधों को ठोस आधार देने की झलक साफ थी. वास्तव में इस यात्रा से संबंधों का ज्यादा सुदृढ़ीकरण हुआ तथा स्वाभाविक भाईचारे, दोस्ती और कठिन परिस्थितियों में बिना बुलाये मदद के लिए खड़ा रहने का विश्वास दिलाकर प्रधानमंत्री मोदी ने मानवता और भावुकता की आवश्यक दीवार, स्तंभ और रंग-रोगन के साथ स्थिर रिश्तेदारी के भवन को पुनः खड़ा कर दिया. इसके बाद भारत मालदीव के साथ और मालदीव भारत के साथ संबंधों को लेकर निश्चित रह सकता है.



आपके पत्र

गिरता भूजल स्तर

साल-दर-साल भूजल स्तर में भी कमी आ रही है. भारत के अनेक राज्य पानी की कमी के चलते बेहाल हैं. सूख घूँस चुके हैं. नदी, तालाब और अन्य जलस्रोत अतिक्रमित हैं. अत्यधिक जलदोहन और समुचित संरक्षण के अभाव के चलते जल अभाव की विकरालता आने वाले समय में समस्त जीवों के लिए बड़े संकट की घंटी है. शहरों और महानगरों में जिस प्रकार पानी की बर्बादी हो रही है, उससे तो इन शहरों में रहने वाले लोगों का अस्तित्व खतरे में है. जमीन से 500 फीट से भी नीचे से सबमर्सिबल पंपों द्वारा पानी निकाल कर घरे के फर्श और गड्डियों को धोया जा रहा है तथा बेतहाशा पानी बहाया जा रहा है. ऐसे लगता है कि जल संश्लेष जैसे मामलों में भी संपन्नता संवेदनशीलता में कमी ला ही देती है. इनको कोई रोकने वाला नहीं है. कुछ दबाव पड़ने पर कार्रवाई के नाम पर इनको सी-पांच सूी का चालान थमा दिया जाता है, जबकि ठोस कार्रवाई की जरूरत है.

सतप्रकाश सनोडिया, रोहिणी

ब्रिटेन और राष्ट्रसंघ हस्तक्षेप करे

रविवार को हांगकांग में 10 लाख लोगों ने चीन के खिलाफ ऐतिहासिक प्रदर्शन किया. पहली जुलाई 1997, जब चीन के हाथों से हांगकांग की कमान आयी, उसके बाद इतना बड़ा प्रदर्शन कभी नहीं हुआ था. जब तक वह ब्रिटेन का उपनिवेश था, वहां का शासन-प्रशासन एक पूंजीवादी लोकतंत्र की नीति से चला रहा था. हस्तंतरण के वक्त ही चीन और ब्रिटेन में यह लिखित समझौता हुआ था कि हांगकांग के मामले में चीन एक देश-दो नीति के तहत काम करेगा. वर्ष 2047 तक उसे इन नियम से बंधे रहना था, मगर 2019 में ही चीन ने हांगकांग के लिए नयी प्रत्यर्पण नीति का ऐलान कर दिया, जिसके तहत आरोपियों को चीन प्रत्यर्पित करके मुकदमा चलाया जायेगा. यह एक दमनकारी अधिनियमकवादी नीति है. ब्रिटेन और राष्ट्रसंघ को इसमें हस्तक्षेप करना चाहिए.

जंग बहादुर सिंह, गोलपहाड़ी, जमशेदपुर

ताजा सस्ता कर्ज !

आजकल बहुत कुछ हदियात भरे अंदाज में रिजर्व बैंक कहता है, भले लोग समझें या न समझें. एक जमाने में कर्ज में ढ़्बा व्यक्ति खुशहाली से महरूम, समाज की नजरों में गिरा हुआ ईसान होता था. आज खुशहाली की खातिर कर्ज के हौज में डुबकी लगाने को हर कोई बेताब है. कर्जों की बढीलत रोटी, कपड़ा और मकान के दिन भी बुलंदी पर हैं. 'ऋण' कृत्वा पूर्य पीवते' जैसा अमोमल वचन समृद्धि का मूल मंत्र बन गया है. याद हो, की सगिरेट उद्योग अर्थव्यवस्था की कुंजी थी, जिसे खूबसूरत इशतहारों ने खूब बढ़ाया. जाने किसकी नजर लग्यी, वही सगिरेट 'सेहत के लिए हानिकारक' हो गयी. डर है, कर्जों की ज्यादा खुराक सेहत के लिए हानिकारक न हो जाए !

एफके मिश्रा, मां आनंदमयनीगर, रातू, रांची

पोस्ट करें : प्रभात खबर, 15 पी, इंडस्ट्रियल एरिया, कोकर, रांची 834001,
फैबस करें : 0651-2544006,
मेल करें : eletter@prabhatkhabar.in
पर ई-मेल संक्षिप्त व हदीदी में हो.
लिपि रोमन भी हो सकती है.

